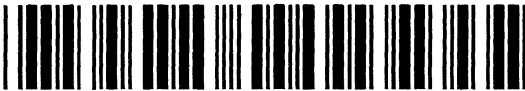
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The South and the West of It

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Ireland and Me

Oriana Atkinson

Random House

NEW YORK

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This book is dedicated to MARIE DORO *wit' lov.*

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Part I

Prelude to Ireland

The liner anchored off Cobh and we went on deck to look at Ireland. After any voyage, however short or safe, it is always heartening to glimpse land again and to be reassured that the whole world has not turned watery, bounded forever by the swaying horizon. We were for Southampton, but other passengers were leaving the ship, their journey done. They may have been happy to reach their destination, but they looked only chilly and miserable in the cold dawn. Washed by the sulky waters of the bay, Ireland itself lay lifeless and sullen in the semidarkness.

Was this the fabled land of wild and stinging green?

Our ship's great nose pointed at what looked to be desolation. The tide water seemed to be urging us back to the livelier waves of deep ocean. Then, her business with Cobh concluded, the liner swung away and Ireland was swallowed by a thick mist that rose suddenly to engulf her.

"Ireland of the Welcomes," was the tourist slogan. A fairly flabby welcome, that one had been.

Yet for some reason the glimpse I had had of that shadowy shore came back to me often in the days that followed. I began to

want to visit Ireland. In the two years that elapsed between my first sight of her and the time that I finally went there, I made enough decisions to go and decisions *not* to go to have worn out a sturdier character than mine.

I am not a very methodical or logical person; my progress through life has always been a series of leaps and bounds. But in connection with Ireland, I determined to be careful. I would investigate every angle. I would read books about Ireland; I would talk to people who had visited Ireland; I would be thorough, I would inquire, I would absorb. Before I set foot on boat or plane to sail or fly to that fabulous land, I would know all there was to know.

Brother.

It would have saved a lot of trouble and effort if I had just held my nose and jumped in feet first, the way small boys go into a pool.

It is a strange thing that wherever your interest happens to turn, be it to uranium, linoleum or aluminum, or anything else, suddenly you see the word everywhere; the subject is discussed everywhere, newspapers seem to be passionately interested in it, new books written about it appear. You may never have heard anything about the subject before, but now you can see nothing else. So it was with Ireland and me.

Everything I heard or read was so entertaining and alluring that I wondered why people bothered to go anywhere else. Why was it that Ireland was not the playground of the world, if it really was as magical and merry as described? I examined that question and the deeper I examined the clearer came the answer. The reason that Ireland is not the playground of the world seemed to be: *rain.*

One book I consulted said—after a lot of hedging—that the annual mean rainfall of Ireland is about thirty inches. . . . Thirty inches is about fourteen inches above my knees and that is a lot of rainfall. The book went on to say: "The weather in Ireland is com-

"The art and the treasure of Ireland is the spoken word," he told me. "There's no lack of entertainment, no need for television or movies while an Irishman has spittle in his face."

I began to think that Mr. Durnin was an excellent choice for director of Irish tourism.

"The fishing and the shooting are almost as good as they were in the beginning of time," Mr. Durnin told me. "You must know that with us Irish there's no sense of hurry, everything goes placid and slow. We think that the Man Who made time made plenty of it, and we use it that way. . . . I could talk to you for hours about my home, but what was it you wanted to know?"

I had wanted to know about rain, but by that time I really did not care whether it rained in Ireland or not. It can't rain *all* the time *anywhere*. I remembered that once an Oregonian said to me, "If you haven't got webbed feet before you come to Oregon, you'll certainly have them before you leave here." Yet when I visited Oregon the sun shone every day for two weeks. Going to Ireland became a calculated risk. In this day and age we must all learn to live dangerously.

I thanked Mr. Durnin, picked up another map of Ireland and left.

Whoever looks at a map of Ireland must be touched at once by the music of the Irish place names. Reading at random will prove delightful, and will bring out the strange fact that Ireland is not unknown country. Somehow or other most of us have absorbed a lot of Irish lore whether we have any Irish forebears or not. Most of us have heard of Tipperary and Limerick, of Tralee and Killarney and Shannon and Blarney. These are like bells—ringing, soft and lovely sounds that make pictures even in the least receptive mind. To me, they were completely familiar. I had heard all those place names long ago. Rosie O'Leary had told me stories of her Irish home when I was a little girl.

All my childhood days were spiced and colored by this little

old Irishwoman, Rosie O'Leary. Rosie would be called a "character" nowadays. She came and went as she pleased in our neighborhood in Greenwich Village. One morning our doorbell would ring, and there would be Rosie. She would bob in greeting, grin quizzically, and without further ceremony would make her way downstairs to our big, dark basement kitchen. She would shuffle over to the big iron sink and begin to wash dishes. There were always plenty of dishes in that old sink.

Rosie was back. How long she would stay was anybody's guess. Meanwhile she took over the dishwashing and the laundry and regaled the whole family with stories about her home in Ireland.

After a few weeks she would come to my mother and say perkily, "If you've a bit of change, Mistress, I think I'll be over the road." My mother would give her some money and Rosie was away. Maybe no further than next door to the Tuttles', where her arrangements were the same as with us; or perhaps across the street to Mrs. Ross or down on Thirteenth Street near Sixth Avenue to the Cochrans'. She liked a change of scene and pace. So far as I can remember she never carried tales from one house to another. She had little interest in us, though she was loyal to us. As I look back now, I realize that she considered us colorless. Moreover, we were all Protestant, and anybody who was not Roman Catholic was not quite real to Rosie. Her realities were all in the past: her early childhood in Ireland, her early young womanhood in America.

Her talk and her stories are dimmer with me now than they used to be. I remember that she used to tell stories of how she came to America from County "May-*o*" as a young immigrant, a "greenhorn." She would dab at her wild white hair when she told that story, and her quivering, gnarled old fingers would show how her hair had curled over her head and brow.

"Black as the raven's wing it was, black and sprightly."

Her first job in America had been as nursemaid in a wealthy family named Bull and she had lived in their service for many

years in high style. She told us glowing stories of Harry Bull, the baby in her care. He had evidently been her idol, for she made him out to be a child of rare talents and wit.

"He's a grown man now," she would sigh, "with never a thought for Rosie O'Leary that kept his hands from being burnt to the bone more than once."

How she came to the roving life, as she called it, I never knew. But when she worked in our neighborhood she was a tiny, frail, merry old dame, with swollen, hurting feet and her thick hair hacked off short and standing in white peaks. Her eyes were a deep sapphire and she was so near-sighted that she had to tip her head back and squint through narrowed eyelids to bring things into focus.

She was married to a dirty alcoholic named Mike. Mike would occasionally come reeling to our basement door in search of Rosie, for a handout of food and whatever "change" she could scrape together for him. He was permitted to sleep on a rickety cot that stood in the furnace room. I never got a good look at Mike because Rosie would rush out and spread her skirts between us, so that he was hidden from me, and chase me out of the kitchen like a flustered mother hen. Mike never stayed long; he staggered away into the twilight, not to be seen again for months.

The occasion I remember most vividly in connection with Rosie was the time she took me to visit her brother and his family. They lived in Staten Island, a real no man's land as far as I was concerned. Why my parents permitted me to go was a mystery. Usually they wouldn't let me go around the corner alone, not to think of Staten Island with Rosie. But they did consent, and off we went one bright Sunday. Rosie was unusually neat in shabby black with a mashed-looking hat and a rakish red rose on the brim. Me—of course I was as fancy as a fond mother could manage. The ferry-boat ride was a rare treat, and the long ride afterward in the open trolley car was a thrill.

When we got off the trolley, we walked a little way along a

leafy country road until we came to two square stone pillars that marked the entrance to a driveway. The driveway curved up to a fine old mansion. There was a porch around the whole house and long French windows opened on this porch. Even on that sunny day there seemed to be a gloom about the house, probably caused by the tall, spreading evergreens that held their boughs thick against the light. I hesitated at the porch steps, thinking that Rosie would go around to the back door. Not Rosie; not this time. She took my hand and led me along the veranda until we came to a certain open French window. There, without hesitation, she stepped across the sill and took me into the house. We were in a long, shadowy room, a dining room, where a huge table was covered with a white cloth and loaded down with dishes and silver. Around the table sat a company of giants, or so they seemed to me. They were large Irish people and they were bending to their food with Irish enthusiasm. A big woman in a snug black uniform, with a frilly white apron and a frilly little white cap, was trotting around the table passing dishes laden with meat and vegetables.

A brawny man at the head of the table caught sight of Rosie and me and stood up quickly and came to her, his face quivering with emotion. He did not speak, but clasped her rough hand in his own, which was as big and puffy as a sofa cushion. He stood looking at her, almost in tears, and gradually silence fell in the room and all the eaters turned to look at the visitors. There were cries of welcome from them all when they realized who had come to call, and the room filled with the sound of Irish voices as Rosie's family left the table and rallied around her. Rosie untied my bonnet and drew off my gloves, and laid her own hat and gloves on a nearby couch. Soon we were wedged tight against the table and the interrupted Sunday dinner got under way again. I am sure that nobody had the slightest idea who I was and nobody cared, once it became established that I was not a member of the family. The meal went on for a long time; it seemed to me endless.

There were no children there except me, and after a while

somebody delegated the big servant girl in the tight black dress to take me on a tour of the downstairs rooms. I got the impression of large rooms paneled and furnished in black walnut. There seemed to be hundreds of pieces of heavy furniture, red carpets, rugs on top of red carpets, and bric-a-brac and knickknacks galore. The final grandeur was a small pipe organ, with gold pipes all along the wall of one room.

It was getting late and we had a long trip back to Manhattan. Rosie got herself and me together, bade many cheery farewells and we started off. Rosie's brother, the biggest and heartiest of all the big, hearty men, walked with us to the pillared entrance of the driveway.

"When will you stop this nonsense?" he growled at the last. "When will you come over here where you belong and rest? I've done well, you know it. You're welcome as the flowers in May. My house should be your home. Will you come?"

"Take shame to you," Rosie murmured, embarrassed. "You know well that I'll never leave Mike and him you won't have here."

"Mike!" said the big man in scorn, and spat into a rose bush. "Who'd believe that you'd cleave and cling to a dirty old dog like him!"

"The priest believes it, that's who!" snapped Rosie.

"Ah, well," sighed Rosie's brother.

And so they parted.

My mother and father were astonished when I told them where we had been. My mother must have questioned Rosie about it, but whatever the story was, Rosie's position in our household remained practically unchanged. Oh, for a day or two she did a lot of head tossing and she held her chin high as she slip-slopped about her work. But that soon passed and things went on as before.

Rosie's talk was of strange and fabulous people and places. A garment that did not fit was "big enough for Finn McCool." People who did not get on well together "fought like Kilkenny

cats." When I got a little out of control and began cutting up capers, Rosie would say cheerfully, "None of your Andrew Martins, now!" My parents and I were entirely ignorant of the land where these phrases had origin and knew nothing of the lore that they represented. But the words entered into our everyday living and we used them as our own long after Rosie had disappeared from our lives.

Rosie told me about bog men and banshees, too; about old priests and wise old women in black shawls. She told me about a green mountain and a blue lake and about muddy country lanes filled with sad men, wandering. None of it meant anything to a child of American parentage with no European background or tradition. I did not know that the magic of those stories was much too deep for time to erase or that the melodies of the place names would be well known to me all my life.

I didn't like Rosie; neither did I not like her. I just felt the same way about her that I felt about the old golden-oak kitchen table or the old iron sink. They were there and she was there, no more. I had no welcome for her when she came back to us after having been away for a long time. I had no regrets when, in her "good" black dress and mashed old hat, her soiled cotton housedress and apron rolled up under her arm, she shuffled away. Her big, broken shoes made a scuffling sound when she walked, but they carried her gaily over the road.

Yet the half-bored attention that I gave to the maunderings of this old Irish peasant was of more benefit to me than all the sweating efforts of science or mathematics teachers who hammered at me with lessons. Although I did not know it, Rosie was preparing me for Ireland. When I held the map in my hand so many years later and read the singing names, the memory of Rosie came to me very clean and sweet. It was almost as if a loving hand had reached to me across the years. I was being guided to a place long known, dimly remembered. A place where a little girl had come to walk so familiarly that now the woman's feet seemed to know the way.

It seemed perfectly natural that I should go to Ireland at last.

Yet I had the nagging fear that if I did go to Ireland, I might find myself in the same predicament as the little man in the old story. This little man strode jauntily into town of a Saturday night and, passing a saloon, heard the noise of battle within. Pulling his hat down around his ears, he called out joyfully, "Count me in!" and threw himself against the swinging doors of the café and into the fray.

In one second he came flying out again and landed on one ear in the gutter.

"Count me out!" he said sadly, and he rose shakily to his feet and went away.

Perhaps after all the trouble and expense of going to Ireland I'd find myself counted out by the weather.

I reminded my husband of the time we had stood together at the rail of the ship and looked through the steely light at the lifeless shore.

"Do you think it might be fun to go there?" I asked.

"It might be," he answered, not removing his nose from the *New York Times.*

Like a Sean O'Casey character, I wanted to go and I didn't. I dared to go and I didn't. I began to buy a few necessary things just in case I really decided yes.

The first thing I bought was a warm sweater. The salesgirl who waited on me had a warm, mossy brogue.

"I'm thinking of going to Ireland," I told her.

"Well, then, you have the treat of your life coming to you," she assured me cordially. "I go home to Dublin for my vacation every year of the world. Ah, walking down O'Connell Street, that's the life! But take a hot-water bottle and warm underwear," she went on. "Above all, something warm to sleep in. It's the beds, dear. Let's face it. They're damp!"

Now why should beds be damp? But why argue? I went to buy a warm sleeping garment.

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Did you ever try to buy a warm sleeping garment in the spring of the year in a New York City department store?

A saleswoman, questioned timidly about flannelette nightgowns, put her hand against the base of her throat and gave a small shriek.

"Nothing in *that* line," she said in a very refined voice. "We've got No Call."

I was calling, in a loud, clear tone, but that made no difference. Finally, however, as one humors a feeble-minded child, the salesgirl rooted around and found a tray full of dusty, battered garments labeled "Reduced for Clearance." There was a gritty pink number, with "Final Sale" scribbled on the tag. It was the only thing that looked as if it might protect the wearer from a damp bed, so I had it sent home.

When it was delivered, and I got it unpinned and unfolded, I found, to my surprise, that it was an immense union-suit kind of thing, with feet. My first impulse was to show this strange creation to my husband, but this impulse I quickly stifled. My husband is an extremely courteous and understanding man, but human nature can be pushed just so far. I could imagine his picture of me in the union suit . . . the most gigantic Peter Rabbit ever seen outside Macy's Thanksgiving parade, and pink, into the bargain. The tag said, "Final Sale"—department store people know what they're about. I coudn't exchange or credit it, so I folded my foolish bargain and put it away. I had no idea what to do with it. Damp beds or no damp beds, I would never wear it. Suppose there was a fire at night in an Irish hotel and I came charging out of my room done up in footed pink drawers? The firemen would either get the fright of their lives or else die laughing. I could not face either possibility.

After I had bought the sweater and the sleep suit, things began to accelerate. It was as though I had somehow reached a decision. I went back to Ireland House at 33 East Fiftieth Street, asking more questions and being once more reassured.

On the wall in one of the offices I noticed a large photograph of three horses led by three grooms.

"How does one come to grips with a country whose pin-up girls are horses?" I wondered.

"It's not money that's the god in Ireland," one of the gentlemen of Ireland House told me. "It's horses."

I began to question whether a country addicted to horses would be a good place to visit. I have never known a horse personally and only once have I met one socially. That was when a group of horsy friends got completely out of patience with my considered policy of do-nothing. They lured me out-of-doors—I rarely go out-of-doors—and when I was well out, they grabbed me and boosted me upon the back of the ugliest horse ever foaled.

While the struggle to seat me was going on, this animal turned its oblong face to me and bared a set of teeth like piano keys. We understood each other perfectly. Each would have been glad to call the adventure off, right there. But my outdoor friends were determined to show me what I was missing. Finally they jellied me into the saddle and the beast below me moved away, stately and slow. I felt as though I were on the tip of the Methodist Church steeple. Everything and everybody seemed foreshortened and flattened. The landscape became a kaleidoscope of plain Purgatory.

My mind remained fairly clear, however, and I recalled having read somewhere that if a horse should get out of control the thing to do is to grasp it by one ear, give the ear a good twist and keep on twisting. You never know when a nugget of information is going to come in handy. Goodness knows I had never expected to be in a position to do any ear twisting of horses, yet my subconscious had released this knowledge in the nick of time. The only drawback was that the horse's ears seemed a long way in front of me, bobbing against the horizon. Then, too, one could not call this horse out of control. At first. It hobbled jerkily along, stopping to nibble grass whenever some weed appealed to it.

The rest of my "friends" were about to disappear over the crest of a hill when "my" horse caught a glimpse of the flying tail of the last horse over. Old memories apparently stirred; old triumphs were recalled. With a leap that took all four feet from the ground, away the horse went to overtake and surpass.

My progress was evenly divided between exhilaration and torture. Exhilaration when I flew up off the saddle and got enchanting glimpses of the wide countryside. Torture when I came down on the saddle with a shattering thud which drove my spine up into my brain-pan.

At first I was terrified. Then I began to get mad. Should I, born a Torrey, be bested by a dirty old horse? Furiously I reached forward and grasped one of the hairy ears. It felt awful, but I gave it the very best tweak I could. To my astonishment the animal did not become docile. In fact it acted as though ear-tweaking were part of its daily routine. Then it all came back to me. The article had been about a *mule*. Twist an unruly *mule's* ear, it had said.

The horse and I went on.

Much later, the horse suddenly stopped. Before I could manage to fall off, it whirled and bounded like a kangaroo back down the hill we had just painfully ascended. Before you could say knife it was back in the stable whence it had originally sprung.

It walked stolidly into its stall and began to munch on some cereal that had been put in its dish. I had long ago given up the ear and I now slid to the floor and tottered out into the yard. I had made no name for myself as a horsewoman, but I had not been dethroned, and that was, in itself, no minor triumph. But then and there my hatred for horses hardened into a cold, solid core. I never wanted to see a horse again.

All this passed through my mind as I stood looking at the photograph of three Irish horses on the wall of Mr. Donal Scully's office. Yet these three bore little resemblance to the leviathan I had known. These seemed to be made of Venetian glass; they were shining and long-legged and seemed as weightless as snowflakes.

Poor me. What with battling with rain and horses, my time in Ireland would probably be spent watching horse races in downpours.

"Ireland's no country for horse haters; the Irish are horse-crazy. Take the case of Tulyar alone," a friend said to me.

I fooled him, because I knew about Tulyar. I'd read all about him. By merest chance, just the day before I had seen an article in a Canadian paper that began, "Tip for Tourists and Others in Ireland: Tully, County Kildare, is more than a postal address. It's the home of Tulyar. Added tip: Never ask who Tulyar is . . ." and went on to say that Tulyar is a fabulous horse owned by the Irish National Stud Company, bred in County Kildare, sold to the Aga Khan and then, a few years later, bought back from him for $700,000. The article added that Tulyar has become part of the Irish social structure. At $700,000, he ought to be. Not even a Texan would pay that much for a horse in America. We're not *that* crazy. (The day I wrote this the news came that a horse called Nashua had been bought by a Kentuckian for $1,250,000. So this proves that Americans are almost twice as crazy as the Irish.)

Another writer about Tulyar drooled and yearned the way an American reporter talks about a young Italian film star. "The most beloved horse in history," the man said. "Tulyar is one of those individuals full of the quality usually referred to as 'color.' He effortlessly commands public attention. It was his lazy brillance as a race horse that first captivated the public . . . To this day we don't know just how fast Tulyar really was, for he never ran 'all out.' This Irish-bred always did just enough to win and no more."

I don't know what I'm talking about, naturally, but my guess is that any American horse that didn't run his heart out and win by as much as he could might just as well pack his nose-bag and go home. That kind of indolent color is not dear to Americans. Is it?

Friends of mine, learning about my hope for an Irish trip, began to add their two cents' worth to all the information I had gathered for myself.

"The place is crawling with wolfhounds," one nice man told me. "These are supposed to be the original werewolves. They are as big as donkeys and will tear anybody apart at the wink of an eye. Horrible creatures, really."

I smiled in superior fashion. Not only did I know about Tulyar, I knew about wolfhounds. I had met a wolfhound, and I was his.

One spring day a year or two ago, my husband and I, with the two young people who are permanent additions to our household, were driving up the Saw Mill River Parkway in New York. We stopped at an overlook, to overlook and to stretch a bit. There was another station wagon already parked there, and a tweedy lady with several small, active children stood near a curving stone wall that edged a field. She was holding what appeared to be a pony by the scruff of its neck. On closer observation the pony proved to be a gaunt monster of a dog, with grizzled, shaggy hair.

It was a strange-looking beast. It had pale eyes and a Dali mustache, and when it glanced disdainfully at us it had the remote and abstracted air of an elderly musician. The lady told us, a trifle wearily, that this was an Irish wolfhound. No doubt she had to answer questions about the dog continually. The largest of all dog breeds, she said, and comparatively few of them in the U.S.A. There was a kennel for breeding them in California and another on Long Island, New York. Because of the immense size of the animals they were not popular as pets.

While the lady was talking about dogs, her wolfhound looked coyly at us down its long, fiddle-shaped nose. The owner gave a command, and the hound was over the wall and racing through the rough field like a fiend set free. It ran itself weary and then it returned to the lady's side. She pointed to the open door of her station wagon and the dog flung itself into the back of the car and lay down, dingy nose on crossed, shaggy paws. The lady's children crowded into the car after the dog and disposed themselves here and there over its ample acreage. One tiny girl laid her rose-leaf face directly on the big dog's face and it turned its pale eyes up to

heaven as if asking God to witness the indignities being visited upon a good, honest creature. The hound gave a great sigh of self-pity and weariness as the children nuzzled for space upon him. But anybody could tell with half an eye that that dog would not have changed places with any animal in Christendom.

"Oh," I said to my husband, "what a wonderful dog!"

The two young people cried, "Let's get one!"

My husband started the car hastily and drove us quickly out of sight of the original werewolf.

For the rest of the trip I dreamed of Irish wolfhounds in their natural habitat. Ancient castles, with lords and ladies moving stately through great stone halls and the wolfhounds sleeping before leaping fires on enormous hearths. I never forgot that fine family wolfhound we met by the roadside, and when my friend said they would tear me apart, I only smiled gently.

"When I go to Ireland," I told my husband, "maybe I'll bring home a wolfhound pup."

"A wolfhound pup is just what we need in a city apartment," my husband said cordially.

I hate it when he gets sarcastic.

It began to be a settled thing for me to find Ireland everywhere. I noticed that one of the elevator boys in our apartment house spoke with a brogue.

"You're Irish, aren't you?" I asked him.

"North of Ireland," he said.

"Have you any relatives living there?" I asked.

"Oh, sure, relatives all over," he told me.

"Where?" I persisted.

"Well, I have a brother," he said thoughtfully. "He's not really in Ireland, like. It's more Australia, kind of."

"Oh," I said.

"You'll find it hard to get along, if you go to Ireland," the elevator boy said. "It's Gaelic they talk almost entirely. A week or two since

they had a rule that for seven days nothing but Irish was to be spoke. You know, like our Be Kind to Animals Week or whatever. 'Speak Irish Week' they called it."

"Are Gaelic and Irish the same?" I asked.

The elevator boy didn't know.

But a Gaelic-speaking country didn't worry me. I'd get along all right. When I lived in Moscow for a year, I knew all about the affairs of the chambermaids and the waiters in the hotel—their separate affairs, I mean, both personal and business. And I couldn't speak or understand a word of Russian at the time. For instance, I learned—who knows how?—that the daughter of one of the chambermaids wanted to be an acrobat. Indeed, she had insisted on going to the State School for Circus Performers to take up that trade. The old chambermaid twisted her hands in despair and said piteously that she had told her daughter that it was a very dangerous business. And the daughter had replied that even living in Russia today was a dangerous business, which the chambermaid did not attempt to deny.

If I can find out things like that without knowing anything but English, Gaelic shouldn't vanquish me.

The first words I try to learn in a foreign country are "No, thank you very much." This is because I carry my diet with me like the old man of the sea. No matter where I go, the food is sure to be something that I should not eat. It's a simple enough matter to wave away the food, but it usually pleases people to find out that you have gone to the trouble to learn a phrase or two of their language.

I knew I'd have to hurry to learn "No, thank you" in Gaelic because I began to hear the most wonderful news about Irish food.

"Filly minions as big as *that*, and for a dollar only," a returned traveler told me with enthusiasm. So far, very good. I am allowed filly minions in any country, but just to be on the safe side I telephoned my guide and mentor Thyra Samter Winslow. Miss Winslow is famous as a writer of fiction and nonfiction. She is also an authority on nutrition and diet, and under her watchful eye I was

able in a comparatively short time to lose twenty pounds where no pounds had been lost before. When Thyra took her eye off me I got a few pounds back again, but that was not Thyra's fault.

"I'll send you a list of foods you can eat abroad," she told me generously. "A kind of traveler's diet, not hard to follow when you are away from home. It's the list I give to my students when they travel. You'll find it very helpful."

In a day or two along came the Winslow Traveler's Diet, and I must admit that I opened it without much enthusiasm. I have been through the old diet mill so often that I did not think there was anything I had not heard about it. But I underestimated Thyra Samter Winslow. I nearly fell off my chair when I read her opening sentence!

"Forget your regular weight reduction diet from the moment you leave America."

Sweet and unexpected words!

"Take with you: Sucaryl or saccharin if you feel the need for sweetening in tea or coffee.

"Take some good therapeutic vitamins.

"Take some envelopes of Knox gelatin and some beef cubes and nothing else in the way of diet equipment.

"Eat the food of the country you're visiting," Thyra said further. "But be sure it is the food the natives are eating. You can eat twice as much as you eat at home and not gain weight. Traveling, you suddenly become a human dynamo, increasing metabolism and the need for hundreds of extra calories. Remember the rules of nutrition and eat plenty of protein, whole cereals, eggs, fish, meat, fowl or cheese. Eat a little fat—you'll need it. Eat slowly and chew your food well.

"In Ireland don't neglect to eat the good Irish potatoes. The potato is the most maligned and misunderstood of any food. Supposed experts sing the praise of apples and warn against eating potatoes. As a matter of fact, apples and potatoes are much alike (not as alike as two peas or two potatoes but with lots of resemblances).

The difference is all in favor of the potato! The trouble is that when most people eat potatoes they add gobs of butter or ladles of gravy. Eaten with meat juices alone, the potato is fine food. The nutritional value lies next to the skin so eat the skins, too.

"A potato does contain a few more calories than an apple, but look at the difference in nutritional content. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture tables, a medium-sized potato contains many more valuable food elements than an apple the same size—and has only a few more calories!"

This information was a big surprise to me. Potatoes had been taboo for a long time, and now, hurray! With a chance of going to the land of the potato, I was free, indeed urged, to eat as much of them as I wished, if I cut out the gravy and butter accompaniments.

Thyra ended her letter with a note of characteristic light-heartedness. "I'm eager to get your report on what you eat and what you do not eat," she wrote. "Come back slim and well and beautiful and remember what a certain well-known American playwright did *not* say, 'It's a strong stomach that has no turning.' Love, Thyra."

Now altogether I had a fine fund of information of one kind and another in connection with Ireland. I had found out about the weather, and resolved to pay no attention to my findings. I had found out that mostly Gaelic would be spoken and I had decided that it would make little or no difference. I knew there would be lots of horses, and I had decided to ignore them. The place would be full of potatoes, and I could eat them. I felt that I was what my grandfather used to call "rooted and grounded in the fundamentals" about Ireland, and the only thing that remained for me was to find some way to get there. As a final, flourishing finish to it all, my husband came home one winter evening and told me that we were going to England again in the spring.

"*Now* we can go to Ireland," I said.

"To *England*, I said," he said.

"I know," I answered, "but remember the last time we went, the ship stopped at Ireland. When it stops there this time, we can get off there for a while."

"I haven't time to go to Ireland," my husband said.

"Oh, sure you have," I told him.

"I'm going to London on business," said my husband, quietly and patiently. "I have to be there by a certain date."

"Oh, you do not," I said.

My husband got kind of red in the face and he drew a deep breath and counted ten. Slowly.

"This has been going on for *months*," he said. "For heaven's sake *go* to Ireland."

So I went.

And Miss Witlov went with me.

Miss Witlov

Miss Witlov deserves a few pages for herself.

When she enters any public place or joins any private group, conversation stops, heads turn, there is whispering and wondering. In a mist of Parma violets and an aura of what we have come to call glamour, she looks like *Somebody.*

And she is.

The article about her in *Who's Who in the Theatre* is two columns long. The story of her triumphs on the stage and on the screen would fill a large book. Her name was a household word, and she was an idol in the world of klieg lights and of footlights. There is a famous sketch of her by Charles Dana Gibson. A famous sculptor made a lovely bronze head with her as model. She was a great star.

Yet nearly twenty years ago, at the height of her successful career, she retired from the theatre and from pictures. She retired to the present—the past interests her very little. The world of make-believe no longer exists for her. She lives for now.

My husband and I met her through the good offices of Ward Morehouse, the Scarlet Pimpernel of Broadway. He has been an admirer—a worshiper would be nearer the truth—of Miss Witlov

for a long time. He arranged a party consisting of Miss Witlov, Richard Watts, and my husband and me. And he staged this party at Ye Olde Chop House, 'way down on Cedar Street in Manhattan.

As they say on Broadway and in Hollywood, Ward was "playing against" Miss Witlov's type when he arranged the party at Ye Olde Chop House. Her porcelain loveliness was out of place in that masculine, smoky old tavern, frequented mostly by downtown businessmen and lovers of game and other vigorous foods. To judge by appearances, Miss Witlov's favorite foods should be rose leaves and spun sugar. Yet she did full justice to the elaborate dinner that Ward had chosen for us.

It was more than two years before Miss Witlov and I met again. Our friendship did not mature quickly. But slowly we came to understand each other and slowly we came to enjoy being together. After a year or two, we exchanged notes a couple of times a week. (Miss Witlov's handwriting is a kind of scurrying Gothic scrawl. And she began to sign her letters with something that seemed to read, "Wit lov." Because of this I christened her Miss Witlov, but that is not her name.)

After a while she permitted me to pay her a visit occasionally. And it was on one of these visits that I mentioned that I was considering going to Ireland. She suddenly flamed up with excitement.

"Why!" she exclaimed. "That's the strangest thing! I got a letter from a friend just this morning who was in Ireland recently. She told me about a wonderful castle over there that has been converted into a kind of guest house. If you can get a letter of introduction from somebody who knows the owners, they'll accept you as a guest. Paying guest, of course. Wouldn't it be delightful to stay a week or two in a real Irish castle? I can get a letter of introduction from my friend."

I said it sounded like fun to me.

"I've lived in Italy and Sicily and in France and in Spain and in

England," said Miss Witlov thoughtfully, "but I've never been in Ireland."

We looked at each other speculatively.

"Let's go together," we cried.

And after we'd cried it, we were both scared to death, although we didn't say so, of course. Neither of us could imagine why we had suggested such a mad thing. We are both fanatical about privacy; each of us is a pretty downright and determined person. How would two such personalities blend at close quarters and in continued association? We parted quickly, hoping that the subject of Ireland would never be broached again.

But somehow it *was* broached again, and soon we had definitely committed ourselves to go there together. And the adventure we entered upon with so many misgivings proved to be the liveliest, most enjoyable thing either one of us had done in a long time. We suited each other perfectly as traveling companions.

I found that Miss Witlov's personality and character were like a dome of many-colored glass. She seems so otherworldly and delicate; yet she can tell a phony at a hundred paces and needs only a glance at a dinner check to know whether it has been added correctly. I'm not bad at detecting phonies myself, but *l'addition* baffles me.

I was amazed to realize how often errors can creep into hotel bills, but Miss Witlov assured me that such mistakes can happen in any country on the globe.

"I'm perfectly willing to pay for what I've ordered, at the price listed," she said cheerfully. "But I won't pay for what I don't order, and I check the prices carefully."

The world of the traveler is divided inexorably between the buyer and the seller, the server and the served. Here Miss Witlov maintains an icy and implacable standard of justice. She is a lavish, indeed, an extravagant tipper when she has been well served, or even when she has been badly served by somebody who is well-

meaning and cheerful. But a sloppy chambermaid, a sullen porter, an indifferent waiter get from Miss Witlov a gratuity in exact proportion to the kind of service rendered.

This takes courage. But if more travelers adopted the Witlov System, a modicum of sanity might return to the nerve-wracked traveling world. It might prove a prod to the slovenly, half-insulting attendants who count on American cowardice in this matter—for the majority of traveling Americans can be intimidated into paying well for any kind of service at all. (Poor service is less common in Ireland than in most places, but even there it exists.)

"Get what you pay for; pay only for what you get," says Miss Witlov. I wish this motto would start a trend.

Miss Witlov was a source of delight and loving amusement to me all during our Irish journey and she bore my teasing and laughter with entire good humor. She has the well-deserved reputation of dressing very well and of always looking immaculate and lovely. Her traveling costume had been chosen with care and was a combination of chic and comfort. When we stepped off the lighter onto Irish soil, she was an admirable picture of a fashionable, elderly American traveling lady.

Then Ireland got hold of her.

(I will make no attempt to describe my own appearance. At my very best I somehow always manage to miss being sharp. And when I travel I am not at my best.) Little Miss Witlov, usually the epitome of modishness, soon came to rival me in bagginess and untidiness.

The climate was not what we were used to; it was damp and chilly and very often rainy. We wore everything we had that was woolly, and made few costume changes. There was so much to do that we simply could not spare the time for dry-cleaning or pressing or other rehabilitation.

Miss Witlov's pretty clothes gradually sank into one wrinkled mass. She wore her sables on top of her beaver coat collar, and underneath her coat she wore a large hot-water bag full of hot

water. It was a noble sight to see my little friend pattering down the gloomy corridor of an Irish castle with this comforting bulge held by her encircling arms.

William Ewart Gladstone, the Grand Old Man of England, when battling the English climate, sometimes made use of a hot-water bottle. He said, in this connection, ". . . I would not deny that benefit may be obtained from the use of this ingenious modern invention, but it should be remarked that the vessel ought properly to be filled with soup rather than water, since the former retains its heat longer than the latter."

I did not mention Mr. Gladstone's theory to Miss Witlov for obvious reasons. Miss Witlov is too quick to grasp at innovations.

There were people in Ireland who looked better than we did, and people who looked far worse. The simple truth was that nobody cared how anybody looked, least of all Miss Witlov and me. We grumbled and berated the difficult climate, but every once in a while we came to the astonishing conclusion that we were having one whale of a good time.

Only the other day, when I was talking to her on the telephone, Miss Witlov said to me, "Come on, let's go back to Ireland!"

Maybe we will.

Killarney

When the Irish say "Killarney," they are saying "Ireland." Pronouncing those musical syllables, they manage to imply love of their country, profound admiration for its beauty and definite conviction that no place on earth is its equal. I heard a third-generation Irishman in London say "Killarney," and although he was happily settled in England and wouldn't go back to live in Ireland for a fortune, still, from the way he sighed "Killarney" you'd have thought he was being forcibly detained from the land of his forefathers. An Irishman's heart goes into the word "Killarney," and the Irish people I met could scarcely wait until I had seen their jewel. I am sorry to report that the full magic of Killarney eluded me. It seemed to me that there were many other places in Ireland more beautiful than the famous lakes and fells of the beloved lakeland.

My disenchantment may have stemmed from two reasons. First, we came to Killarney by way of Healy's Pass, instead of the more prosaic highway route. Second, we were there in May, and perhaps May is a little too early for the full glory of emerald green to have utterly conquered the grays and browns of late winter.

Healy's Pass is the back door to Killarney and no wonder gentle Killarney proves a bit of a disappointment after that wilderness and desolation. Healy's Pass must be one of the wildest places anywhere on this planet. Ian MacCarthy, the young Irishman who suggested that we take the road through the Pass, said, "Oh, you must see Healy's Pass! That's really back of the moon!" There couldn't be a better name for it. We always called it "Back of the Moon," after we had been there. If you come that way to Killarney you may be disappointed by Killarney but I'll guarantee you won't be disappointed by Healy's Pass.

Whoever Healy may have been, he was a brave fellow to attempt the pass before the pleasant, well-kept road was made. The motorcar can roll up the easy grades and around the sharp curves so smoothly that you scarcely appreciate the savage terrain from which the road has been hacked. Only a very timid person would be frightened by a drive over this road; but only a blind person could remain unimpressed by the soaring crags and jagged peaks through which the narrow road has to burrow.

Here and there against the ashen surface of the towering hills will come a flash of silver, glittering in the light. This is falling water making a metallic pattern against the rocks. Not real cascades or waterfalls, just gushing water, here today and gone tomorrow. If you will think of some photograph you have seen of the surface of the moon you will get an idea of what Healy's Pass is like. Dead-brown, pitted, jagged: a kind of Grand Canyon upside down.

Miss Witlov started the journey by crying, "Oh, *oh!*" But soon she rode along in silence, awed by the unfolding scene. When we got to Killarney she wrote the lines included here. It seems to me they say everything that can be said about Healy's Pass.

Back of the Moon

Giant walls of Time rise in awesome majesty.
Rocks in ryhthm slant skyward.

Music of eternity.
"Back of the Moon," they call it,
These fearsome halls of mammoth walls.
Dante dreamed of walking here
With Virgil for his guide.
Doré dreamed of being here
Where dreams of dark abide
Gliding, turning breathlessly,
In sudden hushed dismay, along this narrow road.
It is not straight this way,
Mounting higher, higher, higher,
A ladder, rung by rung
We reach the top, Gate of the World
And there a Cross is hung.

A cross is standing at the very height of land. Against the ribbed leaden color of the highest pinnacles, a white marble Crucifixion group has been set. This dazzling man-made sculpture crowns, indeed, almost dwarfs, the most extravagant of nature's efforts.

From the crucifix you begin to drop downhill to Killarney. The landscape gentles and a blush of faint green begins to color the fields and rocks. Through Healy's Pass there is nothing but grinning, dead-bone rock. But now kind earth slowly takes over. The way is steep and the curves are numerous and a little harrowing, but the relief of vegetation and open sky is so keen that danger is easily forgotten. Slowly, slowly now the rolling hills open into little valleys. Then, if your driver is Irish, like our driver, Sean O'Brien, he will draw up dramatically and say impressively: "There it is. There's Killarney."

A string of small dun lakes lying in the folds of a string of colorless hills. After Healy's Pass—poor little Killarney!

Sean O'Brien, reading from his omnipresent guidebook, said, "Killarney means 'The Church of the Sloe' "

"Slow?" I said. "Church of the *Slow*?" I looked so bewildered that Sean and Miss Witlov laughed.

" '*Sloe*' is a wild plum," Miss Witlov told me mildly. "So 'Killarney' must mean 'Church of the Wild Plum.' "

It's a pretty enough name, I suppose, but it seems to me that they might have chosen something more impressive for a place that has become world-famous. It's lovely in Irish—"Killarney" couldn't be lovelier. But 'Church of the Wild Plum' doesn't seem at all adequate to me.

There on the outskirts of the town of Killarney we had paused at a place called "Ladies' View" and we could see at once why it was called that. Probably, after Healy's Pass, this was the first place where a really timid lady might look over the panorama with pleasure. And now from Ladies' View we looked across to the Macgillicuddy Reeks. Macgillicuddy's Reeks surprised us a lot.

When we were planning our trip to Ireland, Miss Witlov and I had studied the map of Ireland and had rolled the sonorous Irish names deliciously on our tongues. We had wondered then about the Macgillicuddy Reeks. I thought they were reefs of rock, shoals along a dangerous shore. But they are mountains and now they were all around us. Sean said that one of those mountains was the highest in Ireland—Carrabtuohill.

We discussed the reason for this mountain range's having been called "the Reeks." We thought perhaps "reek" meant smoke or mist, because Edinburgh in Scotland is called "Auld Reeky," and Edinburgh is a smoky city. These were smoky, misty mountains, half hidden by blowing, smoky mists. (Later I indignantly rejected the explanation of an unsympathetic American with whom I was trying to discuss the meaning of "reeks." "It's my opinion," he said, "that Old Man Macgillicuddy was such an unpleasant character that they could only do his reputation justice by naming mountains after him. 'Macgillicuddy reeks to heaven—Macgillicuddy reeks high as those mountains!' That's what the Irish meant. It's perfectly simple.")

The plain truth of the matter turns out to be that a reek is a

round-topped mountain. Who Macgillicuddy was I never did find out.

Near the Ladies' View there was the usual ruined castle. At one time I would have thought that any castle would pique my interest and attention, but such is human nature that I had already become somewhat callous to these ancient buildings. In Ireland they're all over the place. They dominate and sadden many an Irish town. Yet the people who live in their very shadows seem to know little or nothing about the ruins. "That's more of Cromwell's work," you will be told, as though the dust and disaster of his passing was still in the air. I was sorry that I had not paid more attention when my hard-working history teachers tried to pound the story of Cromwell into my head. I resolved to find all about Cromwell as soon as I could. A man whose bloody thumb print is plain all over any country is worth investigating. I began to sympathize more fully with our own Southerners who are still bitter about Sherman's terrible march from Atlanta to the sea and all the other times of the torch and the terror in the War Between the States. In our South, the surrender to overwhelming odds happened in 1865; and although the memory of this sad time is still bitter in many hearts, the country itself has long ago wiped away most of the scars and ravages left by that war. After all, as Americans count time, 1865 is very long ago. In Ireland, the work of Cromwell's men stands plain to see in every field and town the country through: 1641 is today in Ireland.

Beside the road near Ladies' View was another reminder of times gone. This was a small stone cross, one of the hundreds standing pathetic and solitary by mountain paths and valley streams. "Wherever you see one of the crosses," Sean told us, "that's to mark the place where some rebel died fighting for Irish freedom." I don't know why one lonely little rebel cross should be so much more impressive than a whole cemetery full of crosses. Yet somehow the sight of one simple stone tears the heart and reminds the

visitor that here, at this very place, freedom gave a throb just before one heart ceased to beat in her defence.

After you get settled in your hotel and make a few excursions around the neighborhood, you may perhaps feel more enthusiastic about it and sympathize with Michael Balfe, the Irish composer and poet who wrote these lines in its praise:

By Killarney's lakes and fells,
Emerald isles and winding bays,
Mountain paths and woodland dells,
Mem'ry ever fondly strays,
Bounteous Nature loves all lands,
Beauty wanders everywhere,
Footprints leaves on many strands,
But her home is surely there.
Angels fold their wings and rest
In that Eden of the west:
Beauty's home, Killarney,
Ever fair Killarney!

Killarney's loveliness cannot be denied; its sweet vistas, opening mistily against cloud-filled skies, remain in the memory forever after. Yet you, like me, may feel that there are other places in Ireland equal to, if not surpassing, that world-famous Killarney. The beauty of Glengarriff tears the heart; Limerick has a charm all its own; Tipperary is worthy of the homesick song written in its honor. But it's hard to break the news to an Irishman. It assaults an old myth and spoils an ancient dream. When an Irishman sighs "Ireland," most of the time he means "Killarney."

The town itself is frankly a tourist town. It draws its life from catering to tourists from other parts of Ireland, and from what the Irish call "cross-channel" visitors, not liking to pronounce the word "English," no doubt. Lately more and more Americans are dis-

the public room watching the other Americans and criticising them heartily.

Privately, I considered myself a woman of steel to be able to sit up after My Day in a Jaunting Car. But when a group of glowing people entered the lobby, radiating rude health and youthful vitality, I knew myself for a mere broken reed. The newcomers had taken the full treatment of the Kate Kearney–Gap of Dunloe–Rowboat Ride Down the Lakes. Martin Spellman had said, "If they's anybody on the lake in a boat it'd be a bad thing for them." These people had been there and it seemed to have done them good!

When five of them joined us in front of the lobby fire, Miss Witlov and I recognized a little family we had seen at the hotel in Cork. They were father, mother, two daughters and a son. We introduced ourselves, and were soon swapping experiences.

This was Thomas F. Hanney and his family, of Whitestone, Long Island, New York, U.S.A. They were all pleasant and smiling and their outstanding characteristic seemed to be the fact that they enjoyed being together. Mr. Hanney was tall, vigorous and young. He was competently in charge of his family. He was affectionate and open-handed to the point of indulgence. Yet nobody in the group seemed to be spoiled. Mrs. Hanney, Margaret, was serene and relaxed and the three young people behaved with grace and dignity. Mr. Hanney was obviously well-heeled and enjoyed being well-heeled. He bought everybody everything without ostentation or swagger. He appeared to think that money was to spend. I thought he was lovely.

Margaret Hanney was small, slender and had ash-blond hair. She was of Norwegian extraction. "A squarehead," said her husband mischievously, looking at her out of the corners of his eyes. But Mrs. Hanney had evidently heard that teasing remark many times before. She was not the least bit disturbed by it. She glanced around the family circle to make sure that her two girls and her boy were contented and happy and she smiled absent-mindedly at

Mr. Hanney. He patted her hand and bought us all something to drink.

The Hanney children were Carol, fourteen, Elaine, twelve, and Raymond, ten. It was easy to see that Carol was her mother's first lieutenant and right hand. Now in her dreamy teens, with definite plans for her own future, she had a slightly withdrawn and meditative air. Carol intends to study home economics and will probably slip smoothly into a home of her own at a pretty early age. The other two, Elaine and Raymond, were rather like friendly enemies. They contradicted each other sharply; they narrowed their eyes and clenched their fists at each other, but more as if to hold some franchise than because of any actual ill will.

The Hanneys were rather lukewarm about the excursion they had just concluded. They felt it had been too long, and they were glad it was over. The part that had made the deepest impression upon them was the fact that four men, in a heavy rowboat, had rowed up the Lakes fourteen miles to meet the tourist party, had brought the trippers lunch packed in boxes by the hotel, had waited until the lunch had been eaten and had then rowed all of them fourteen miles back down the Lakes.

"I said to them, 'Why don't you get a motor on this boat?' " said Mr. Hanney. "We'd get there in short order, and you fellows wouldn't be breaking your backs that way."

"They told us that no motors are allowed on the Lakes," explained Mrs. Hanney.

"Well, it's a good rule, I suppose," conceded her husband. "Keeps it nice and quiet and peaceful and all. But what about the men? I said to them, 'It's a fine thing, expecting you to row nearly thirty miles to bring a lot of sightseers back to the hotel.' And they said to me, 'What'd we do for exercise, if we didn't do this?' "

I don't think—and the Hanneys agreed with me—that there is any place in the United States of America where you could hire

four men to row thirty miles every day for any purpose whatever. What couldn't be got by motorboat could be left unhad. And as for doing it to amuse excursionists, I shudder to think what any four men would say to you if you should ask them to do any such thing. Americans would be satisfied to get their exercise some other way.

"Seeing those men rowing that big boat full of tourists just embarrassed me," said Mrs. Hanney. "My goodness, we didn't know where to look or what to say."

"It took too long, that boat," said Raymond.

"It got tiresome," said Elaine, the lily maid, agreeing with her brother for once.

"I'll say," said Carol, "I kept wishing it was over."

Elaine, the twelve-year-old, who is going to be an actress or a film star or perhaps a ballerina, had been just mortified to death, riding through the Gap of Dunloe. Because of the showery weather Mrs. Hanney had insisted that Elaine wear a raincoat, and Elaine said that the raincoat was not glamorous. She was mortified to death, having to wear the tacky thing. One thing, though, had been perfectly glorious, and that was the horse Elaine had ridden. Elaine had been blind to the beauties of the Gap of Dunloe because she had been watching the horse the whole time.

Elaine looked at her father thoughtfully and remarked that she had always wanted a horse. This brought on a family discussion as to whether or not a horse would be a welcome addition to the Hanney household. Raymond said somewhat caustically that *he'd* be the one, probably, who'd have to feed and take care of the horse. Mrs. Hanney sniffed and said she knew and they knew, too, who'd take care of any horse, after the first novelty had worn off. Mr. Hanney said after all, a horse wasn't out of the question. But that subject got rather sidetracked when Mr. Hanney brought out a box of colored slides and a little viewing gadget, and everybody began to look at pictures Mr. Hanney had taken of the new house at Mill Rift, Pennsylvania.

Raymond could hardly wait to see those pictures. He was a slender boy, taut as a fiddle string. He was proudly aware that he was the only son and that, as such, he had a certain superior standing. On the other hand, he was the youngest child and, as such, had to fight for his rights. Raymond was willing to try to be polite to strange women who got talking to his family in Irish hotels. He was even willing to answer politely foolish questions that these women cooked up to ask him. Like what did he intend to be when he was grown up? (Raymond had said patiently that he thought probably he'd be a farmer. Not a modern farmer on a big mechanized farm, but an old-fashioned farmer who milked and mowed and did all the rest of the farm chores by hand. He looked pretty furious when Elaine hooted.)

Now, when it came to looking at the colored slides of Mill Rift, Raymond went to pieces. He snatched. He just *had* to see the pictures of the new sixty-foot steel swimming pool that Mr. Hanney had installed at the Mill Rift place. Raymond looked at the bright image of himself in the sparkling blue water under the glittering American sun and he said he wished he was there right now.

A ripple of homesickness flowed over the Hanneys. Fondly they looked again at themselves in the splendid new pool. They looked again at all the shining wonders of the new Mill Rift home—quite different from the other home in Whitestone, Long Island. Mrs. Hanney handed me one colored slide showing the wide expanse of glass across the front wall.

"There's a great big picture window in front," she said "and another one right in the back. The sun just streams through the whole house." She sighed, remembering the comforts and conveniences. ("How American," I thought. "We want our houses open to sun and air and even to neighbors." Ireland is all stone walls and thick hedges enclosing every man's cottage or castle. But Americans want to be part of life all the time and they want life to come in to them. They want to share their pleasures and

their hours. Ireland is withdrawn and secret. Only the specially invited guest gets past the barriers of stone and bush.)

"I'll be glad to get home if only for one thing," Mrs. Hanney was saying. "And that's to get warm."

"They have the finest hotels, in Ireland," said Mr. Hanney. "That is, as far as the buildings go. They have central heating plants and plenty of peat for fuel. Why no heat, then? They can't expect Americans to come to Ireland and spend money if they don't give us heat. It's a constant battle."

The three Hanney youngsters were still poring over pictures of their home.

"What would you say," I asked them, "if you were to read in the newspaper tomorrow that any American now in Ireland could not return to the United States for two years?"

There was a concerted shriek from the young Hanneys.

"I wouldn't want to stay in Ireland for two years," said gentle Carol definitely.

The glamorous Elaine smoothed her skirt primly over her knees.

"It's too *primitive*," Elaine said sedately.

"It's primitive, all right," agreed Mr. Hanney. "We are over here to visit my father's brother, my uncle. He lives in County Galway, in one of those little thatched-roof cottages."

"We stayed at a hotel in Galway city," said Mrs. Hanney, "and we went out every day to visit them."

"The house is cute," Carol said. "It's like a doll house."

"Not big enough to hold this gang," said Mr. Hanney.

"They cook over the open fire," Elaine said. "I couldn't believe it, first off. I said to Mama, 'Where's the kitchen? Where do they cook?' When they told us, we were surprised."

"Then if your uncle lives in Galway, you must be of Irish descent," I said to Mr. Hanney. He smiled a really beautiful, tender and sunny smile when he answered.

"My father, Patrick Hanney, was born in Galway," he explained. "He emigrated to America when he was in his twenties and

settled in Brooklyn. He met my mother in Brooklyn and they were married there. My mother had emigrated from County Cavan. There were six of us kids. When the oldest one—my sister Catherine—was thirteen, our mother died. Pop brought us all up with the help of Catherine. It wasn't easy for her, poor kid. You can imagine. But she's married now to a lawyer, James McKeon, so that turned out all right. Pop only went to the second grade in the Irish schools and that's all the schooling he ever had. But he gave every one of us a high-school education and we're all doing well."

Whenever Thomas Hanney spoke of his father he smiled, that proud, affectionate smile.

"Pop got a job as a trolley-car motorman soon after he landed in Brooklyn," went on Mr. Hanney, "and he kept that job for thirty-five years. For one generation out of Ireland his kids are doing all right." Mr. Hanney began counting them off on his fingers. "Joseph is a New York City policeman; then comes me: I'm president of the Hanney Fuel Oil Company and the Hanney Fuel Oil Trucking Company in Brooklyn. I started with one truck and now I have thirty-five. Charles is purchasing supervisor for the Sperry Gyroscope Co., and Catherine, as I said, is married to a lawyer. Mary, the youngest girl, is married to John Moylan, a chemist at Socony Vacuum." Mr. Hanney paused for a moment and then said gently, "Jim, the baby, was killed in an American Air Force plane when returning from a bombing mission over Germany in World War II."

Mr. Hanney looked at his sweet little wife and his three fine children and nodded his head thoughtfully.

"Well, that's the story of the Hanney's," he said. "Anything good that's come to us is all because of the way Pop brought us up. I'd be really proud if you could write about him in your book."

The Hanney's and others like them are salt of the earth, and the backbone of America today. One generation away from a tiny

whitewashed stone cottage in Galway, they give all credit and loving gratitude to a sturdy, determined, upright Galway forebear.

The next day I made a little tour of Main Street in Killarney to find out how that world-famous town spent its time. Main Street was lined with small shops of one kind and another, many of which were, to quote Elaine Hanney, "primitive." It was amusing to see how the townspeople went about their affairs, ignoring the tourists who wandered in their midst. I regretting being a tourist for one reason, at least. I had no need to buy and no place to keep a Killarney cabbage. These luscious, fresh and appetizing vegetables were displayed in many of the small grocery stores, either in sidewalk bins or in the windows. And dewier, crispier cabbages I have never seen. I had to restrain myself to keep from buying one and eating it raw on the street.

I could not restrain myself from a visit to the only antique shop in town. I went into this murky little store, and there I met Mrs. M. E. O'Leary, the owner. Mrs. O'Leary is short, stout, firm and severe. She has several chins. Her wares are a jumble of miscellaneous articles. Some are merely souvenirs for tourists, and others are the mysterious small articles that come to rest on the shelves of places like O'Leary's from who knows where and who knows why. There was a small, delicately patterned box that interested me, but when I asked to see it, Mrs. O'Leary looked disapproving. She reached grudgingly into the showcase and brought out the box.

"It's pretty," I said.

"Pretty, but not important," said Mrs. O'Leary. "It's paper mashey." Mindful of the fact that a traveler's luggage is likely to become overswelled with unimportant items, I did not buy the box and I have always regretted it. In fact I bought nothing from Mrs. O'Leary and she was patently disgruntled with so unrewarding a customer. She gave me her card, however: "Antique

Store (Mrs. M. E. O'Leary). 33 Main Street, Killarney. Gifts in Old Silver, Glass and China. 'Everything Old, Nothing New.' "

As I was about to leave, Mrs. M. E. O'Leary reached out and took a branch of flowering cherry from a vase on a table. She presented it to me, unsmiling.

"It won't last long, I suppose," she said, "Still, it'll do you for a while."

I kept along Main Street until I came to a little general store. What attracted me to it was an old-fashioned post card in the window, the photograph of a lovely colleen wearing a hooded cloak and seated in a two-wheeled cart drawn by a tiny donkey. "Slow and Easy Does It," said the caption under the picture. I decided to buy a few cards like the one in the window but the woman of the store said that she had only the one. It had been made fifteen or twenty years ago, she told me, and was a photograph of a Killarney girl.

"She was a beauty," she said, "but she's dead now."

At this moment a mite of a girl came in. Her black hair was strained back into two smooth little braids and she had wide, wondering blue eyes. She wore a dark pinafore, and seeing me there, a stranger, she stood awestruck and silent.

"What are *you* after?" I asked her, as gently as I could.

"Owf a pun o buther," she breathed, twisting one foot behind her and swaying a little.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"N," came her whispered answer. (Later I decided that "n" meant "Ann.")

I gave the little one sixpence and she held it loosely in her grubby baby fingers.

"What will you buy with it?" I asked.

She let out her breath in a long, tremulous sigh.

"Ahhh," she murmured, "I dunno."

It was clear that with the whole world suddenly available to her, the matter might take some thought. So I left her to make

her decision in peace. She was one of many unadvertised Killarney attractions, and I will remember little "N" when most of the other Killarney treats are forgotten.

The following day was to be our last in Killarney. In the morning we went into the ritual dance of assembling ourselves and our luggage, paying our bills and tipping the service staff. We over-tipped Corned Beef, of course, just to get that prowling look off his face. Our driver supervised getting us and our belongings stowed away in the car, and then, Sean at the wheel, we tootled away into the platinum light of the sweet Irish spring.

We were glad it wasn't a "soft" day. I learned the meaning of a "soft" day as soon as we landed in Ireland. Somebody told me a story to illustrate it: One day when the rain was lashing down and the wind was blowing it in stinging sheets around the street corners, an Irishman met a friend and greeted him cheerfully. "Another soft day, thank God," said he.

Our road took us along the Kerry peninsula. We drove along the rough spine of a high ridge, where rocky hills rose against the pale sky on one side and rocky fields, thinly coated with henna-colored moss, fell steeply away on the other. Somewhere below, at the edge of those sloping fields, was the sea, invisible yet surely felt. There was some quality of the air, some movement of the light, and a faint, tangy smell that meant nearness of ocean.

"This is known as the lonesomest road in Ireland," said Sean O'Brien, driving along easily, his chauffeur's cap set at a jaunty angle, his sad Irish eyes darting everywhere. It was a lonesome road, narrow, winding and desolate. Nowhere a house, nowhere a human figure, nowhere a grazing animal or any little wild thing scuttling for cover behind a jutting rock or a clump of waving brown grass. Suddenly *we* felt lonesome. We felt cut off from the rest of humanity and we began to imagine that we might be driving along this lonesome road forever, like characters in a Sartre play.

"How long is this lonesome road?" we asked, and Sean, con-

sidering a moment, said, "Let's see. From Moll's Gap to Sneem, about fifteen miles, it is." That broke the melancholy spell. "The lonesomest road in Ireland" had meant to us Americans a fearsome distance of hundreds of miles. Fifteen little miles of lonesomeness were easy to endure.

We drove on peacefully, then, and the dreariness of the landscape passed smoothly by. Then around a lean curve of the road we came upon a little brick and stone building set staunchly back in a muddy yard, glass eyes glittering in the morning light. Just at the edge of the slate roof was set an engraved stone reading, "Dineen School." On this windy ridge, in country seemingly bare of human life, the Dineen School made the lonesomest road in Ireland warm.

"Let's stop a minute and look," I said to Sean, and he stopped the car beside the little iron gate that opened in the enclosing fence. I was at home again, seeing that small, courageous schoolhouse. It reminded me of the stone schoolhouse on Durham Mountain, in Greene County, State of New York, U.S.A. Just such an outpost of civilization as the Dineen School, it had been built by pioneers who settled that steep hillside of the Catskill Mountains. To that school had gone the children of the pioneers and their descendants from the first days of the settlement until a few years ago, when all the one-room schools had been abandoned as schools and sold to city people for week-end playhouses. Now the children go to central schools and are taken there by buses. The Dineen School took me back home, and I was so touched and interested that I wanted to see more of it.

"Let's go in," I said to Miss Witlov, but she, gentle lady, sank back in her corner of the car in an agony of shyness.

"I'll wait here," she said faintly.

"Go in, please," I said to Sean O'Brien, "and ask the teacher whether I can come in and visit." Sean set his cap straight on his brow, for this was a serious affair, requiring a businesslike manner. Off he went into the schoolhouse and he came back smiling.

"She says you're welcome, all right," said my ambassador, and I waded through the mud of the yard and went into Dineen School.

There was a small entry where the children's coats were hanging along one wall. Then we entered the schoolroom against a most alarming battery of astonished eyes. I have read stories by people who were granted an audience by Hitler or Mussolini or some other great and powerful and overwhelming figure. My walk through the bare little room of Dineen School to the desk of the teacher was certainly as nerve-racking as anybody's approach to majesty. It was a relief to arrive at the teacher's desk. The teacher was Miss O'Sullivan.

She waited for me and greeted me with a smile. I was glad she was on my side, for I had the feeling that discipline was no problem to Miss O'Sullivan and that her frown alone would be enough to put the quakes into any unruly scholar. She was a big woman, dark haired and clear-eyed. She wore a sturdy, square tweed suit. At one corner of her book-laden desk was a cup and saucer, the cup neatly inverted and set primly, a reminder and a promise of refreshment to be. The benches and desks of the scholars were placed close to the teacher's desk; those of the littlest children facing Miss O'Sullivan, those of the older children at right angles. There was a fireplace behind the teacher's chair, but even though the day was chilly and damp there was no fire burning nor any sign of a recent fire.

The oblong room was as bare and cheerless and glum as are most schoolrooms where education has not taken a modern slant. The room was clean but dingy and had the defeated and beaten-up look quickly taken on by any place inhabited by the vigorous young. Even if children did nothing but creep silently into a schoolroom and sit quiet on little iron benches before little wooden desks, there would emanate from them enough vitality and devastating power to send to slow ruin the building given over to them.

So it was with the well-worn room of the Dineen School. It

just looked discouraged. And the clothing of the children had the same look of discouragement and defeat. Most of the clothing was shabby and worn, but it was proudly clean, or had been when the children left home. Now there was upon all of them the grubbiness and the smudginess of youth everywhere coming to grips with learning and getting the worst of the encounter. But there was nothing discouraged or defeated about the eyes that fastened upon me. I stood abashed and nervous before the clear regard of those Irish eyes.

There were about twenty or twenty-five children in Miss O'Sullivan's school, all children of neighboring farmers.

"How do they get to school?" I asked, remembering that for a long way I had seen no houses and thinking that perhaps the parents drove the children to school in traps or carts.

"Walk, then," said Miss O'Sullivan cheerfully.

"Rain or shine?" I asked, thinking of the weepy Kerry skies.

"They walk," said Miss O'Sullivan with finality.

I've often heard oldsters brag about the distance they walked to school when young, and proud, too, they were if they could tell of bad weather and a way difficult and long. Here before me was a roomful of scholars who would one day have the same privilege. For by the time Miss O'Sullivan's youngsters are old and full of brags, the young of Ireland will be going lorldly to school in buses, without doubt.

Now that I had intruded upon the school and was standing before them like a visitor from Mars, I saw that I should have to say or do something quickly, to justify my intrusion. I decided to bring the children into the affair to turn attention from myself.

"Who is the oldest girl?" I asked, that being the first question I could think of. Miss O'Sullivan gave a soaring swoop of her hand and a gentle, slim child rose.

"Norah Nash," answered this brown-haired Lily of Kerry when I asked her name. She stood drooping like a flower, slender and delicate, and her voice was so timid I could scarcely hear her.

"Thirteen," she murmured when I asked her age. So the senior girl of the school was thirteen years old.

The oldest boy was Jackie O'Connor, in nondescript shirt and trousers, but very brave in new, knee-high rubber boots. He was strong and vigorous, towheaded and clear-eyed, with a red-and-white complexion so perfect that it seemed enameled. He stood quiet, with a plain, good dignity, and answered my questions sedately.

"Thirteen in June," he said in a voice like a purling brook.

"I *tell* them to *speak up*," said Miss O'Sullivan sharply, "but they hardly open their mouths."

Miss O'Sullivan went on to explain that her school comprised grades from the infant class to the sixth grade and that few of the children go beyond the sixth grade but stay at home to help with the farm work after they finish being sixthers.

The infant class consisted of four infants, and Miss O'Sullivan briskly summoned them to stand before us. Three girls and a boy: Jean, Kevin, Brigid and Eileen, to read from right to left. I forgot to ask their ages, but they were probably between four and five. Jean was the biggest and heaven knows that was not very big. She had a wild mop of bright red hair curling thickly all over her sweet little head and down upon her shoulders. She had china-blue eyes and a milkwhite skin, against which the crimson of her cheeks was slowly deepening. Jean, though God or Miss O'Sullivan strike her dead, was filled with giggles. She desperately pressed a wee, dimpled hand across her laughing mouth, but the giggles ran between the fat little fingers and her tiny body shook with mirth as she tried to behave herself.

Kevin was not like that. Kevin, one saw, took life seriously, and on this particular occasion he realized the necessity of being graver than usual. He was about eighteen inches high and shaped like an oak stump. His hair was dusty brown and stood up in rough, unruly points. He kept his chin drawn in, and a wary look was

in his upturned eyes. He was not exactly afraid, but he was on the alert and ready for any way the cat might jump.

Biddy—I'm sure Brigid was called Biddy—was the tiniest tot, pale, skinny, black-haired and homely. Biddy was of the workers of the world, the good-hearted, sympathetic spinsters who work their fingers off for other people and who are revered absent-mindedly in return. Now Biddy looked at me keenly with shoe-button eyes. Her thin red mouth was drawn primly down at the corners. She was an extremely miniature maiden aunt and I loved her dearly for what she was and for what she doubtless would become.

Eileen, the last of the infants, was brown-haired and golden freckles stood out clear against the clear cream of her skin. She was lacking two front teeth and kept her tongue in the place to cover the deficiency. She was afraid, and she trembled so that I could see her shudder. But this was school, and awful things were forever happening to scare small girls in that strange place. Eileen did not look at Miss O'Sullivan, but she knew that Teacher was there. If Teacher permitted this visitor in the Dineen School, doubtless there was some reason, some good reason for it, and Eileen was enduring it as best she could.

So the members of the infant class of the Dineen School looked at me. I was so delighted with them that I had all I could do to keep from sweeping all four of them into my arms, tight against my ample bosom, and bussing all their sweet, surprised faces. But panic was already brushing them with its wing and even Jean's crimson cheeks were beginning to be drained of color.

"Don't just *stand* here," I told myself savagely. "*Do* something!" But what?

Then I remembered that when my visit to Ireland was only a dream, I had thought I would make some little gifts to give to any children I might meet. Out of a grab bag of odds and ends, I had fashioned some little flowery wreaths and some buttonhole ornaments of colored cotton vegetables and bells. I must have had

forewarning that I would need such trinkets, for if ever they were to come in handy it was now.

"Look here," I said briskly to the worried infants, "I tell you what I'll do. If you'll show me how well you can read, I'll give each of you a present from America." And I whispered to Sean O'Brien to get a certain little tote bag from the car.

The infant class rippled like a wheat field in a June breeze. The children lacked the courage to look at one another or at Teacher. They only looked at me. Blankly.

Now Miss O'Sullivan crisply supplied to each child a pink cloth primer with colored pictures and big, black print. Such quaint little books would bring a good price at a country auction in America; they are something like our much-loved McGuffey. The little ones grasped their books and stared at the familiar pages. Jeannie of the bright red hair was to be the first to read, and she was so confused and scared that I cursed myself for having brought such a trial upon her. So I went and stood beside her and pointed to the printed words with a firm forefinger.

This authority steadied Jeannie's nerves and, taking a deep breath, she read: "I see tin min." Flooded with relief, she turned red and giggled.

Kevin, the tough lad, was next. While Jean was performing he had watched her closely and strained every muscle to hear. Given a sign by Miss O'Sullivan that it was now up to Kevin, he decided that he could do no better than follow the leader.

"I see tin min," he said stoutly.

I pointed out an omission.

"Ten *big* men," I corrected.

"Big, then," Kevin amended, shrugging his shoulders.

Next came Brigid, baby of the babies. Truly, now she seemed no bigger than a mouse, but she was a brave little girl. She fixed her eyes fiercely on the sentence my finger pointed to.

"I see tin hins," muttered Brigid.

And nearly fell to the floor with joy that she was finished.

And now came Eileen. Her eyes were like the bright, mad eyes of some baby animal cornered in a hedge. She lowered her sick gaze to the terrible puzzle of the page and, following my inexorable finger, said in a voice that was the ghost of the whisper of a sigh: "I see tin fat hins."

It was *over!* They were *free!* The infant class now dared to look at one another and they preened themselves a bit under the extravagance of my praise. All but Kevin. He gave a fierce toss to his head and straightened his shoulders. He had struck a fine blow for Ireland, and well he knew it.

Now came the crowns of victory. From the tote bag I drew out a plastic hoop with bright blue forget-me-nots fastened upon it and, leaning over, put it upon Eileen's ashen-brown hair. Poor little toothless one, she simply did not know what to do.

You could have cut the silence in that room with a very dull knife. Eileen put up a trembling hand to feel the crown while I popped another one on wide-eyed Brigid. Glory shone out of that dark little mug. It was the first time that I ever saw stars, real stars, in anyone's eyes.

To Kevin I gave a bunch of infinitesimal carrots with a little golden bell attached. I had thought when I made it that it was pretty silly, and that nobody but myself would like such a bit of nonsense. I expected Kevin to sneer at my carrots and maybe to say scornfully, "An' what do you think *that* is?" But it never happened. Kevin took the lunatic present in his grimy fist and on his face was the look of an Olympian champion. He, who had wrought well, had been suitably rewarded. Justice had been done. He pushed out his lower lip in an effort to keep from grinning and gave me what came very near to being a wink!

To Jean, that charmer, I gave a wreath of delicate red daisies. I was sorry, at first, that I had no blue forget-me-not garland for those russet curls. But when the jaunty red daisies crowned her, nothing could have been more becoming or gayer.

"Ah," said Miss O'Sullivan, "they love those things, surely.

They'd never get anything like that, you know." Then, severely, she said to the infant class, "And what do you say to the lady?"

Not for nothing had those four earnest scholars attended Miss O'Sullivan's school. Among other things, they had been taught manners, and now was the time to prove it. Looking me square in the face, all four of the youngest set remarked something that an experienced lip reader might have interpreted as "Thank you."

Now it was time to go, before the fun and the warmth faded. The infant class was back in its seats, glowing. The rest of the school was regarding them with respect. When I said my good-bys and headed for the door, a rosy-faced boy about seven years old darted before me and opened it with a flourish. He wore a white shirt and battered knickerbockers and he was barefooted.

"Thank you," I said, thinking that no American progressive-school child would have done any such gallant and spontaneous thing.

The boy bowed like a belted earl and closed the door gently after me. I went out to rejoin Miss Witlov, who had been waiting so long and so patiently.

As I was about to step into the car, I saw a huge, cream-colored bird with black wing tips hovering low over the rough field across the way. As I watched it, it plummeted down and was lost to sight below the ridge of the hill. It was all over in a flash, and neither Miss Witlov nor Sean O'Brien caught a glimpse of it. It seemed to me that I was having all the fun. (Some weeks later I described the bird to my husband, who is a confirmed bird-watcher. He said rather grumpily that it was a gerfalcon and that he, a trained observer, had never seen one in his whole life.)

We swooped down from high land to Sneem, a little town embraced by a hairpin turn in the road. I wish there were some other way to describe a road that turns back upon itself, but hair-pin seems to be the only phrase. Sneem is a collection of one-story houses: pink houses, blue houses, yellow houses, brown

houses, all atilt and huddled together. Sneem is a painting by a French impressionist. On the pint-sized village green a small flock of wild ducks grazes peacefully, quite oblivious to passers-by—five or six Mallards, with iridescent feathers, and long, skinny necks stretched out to find bugs in the grass.

"As long as anybody can remember there's always been wild ducks in Sneem," said Sean O'Brien. "I don't know why, but there they are."

The road followed the seacoast now, seldom out of sight of the sea, and once in midmorning we stopped for a while and sat looking out over the many-colored water. Dark waves were flinging themselves into little pine-tree-shaped crests. To the east, the sky was leaden. To the west, it was full of billowing clouds edged and haloed with gold. To the north, the white sun shone clear from placid, delicate blue. All these kinds of sky were reflecting different lights on the surface of the wind-driven ocean. Any honest painter, however skillful, must have broken his brushes in helpless rage, trying to reproduce the beauty of that scene. Any poet worthy of the name would have given up seeking the perfect word and leaped off the cliff in despair. (Or, like that wonderful pantomime artist Jimmy Savo, they might just have jumped on their hats.)

Sean O'Brien said, pointing at the wide waste of waters, "There's nothing between you and America now but just that bit of sea."

The sea mist was cool on our faces and the soft light and shifting shadows were all around us. There was more between us and America than just that bit of sea. The whole mystery of Ireland lay between us and America. We had to find out more about this contrary and secretive country before we could go home.

To prove just how contrary Ireland can be, the road now turned inland and twisted through a small birch wood. Here the landscape was so perfect and serene that we were reminded of the art photographs that Wallace Nutting used to make. Under slender white birch trees grew banks of fragrant fern; violets and daffodils

spangled the shadowy glades. The silence was profound. Not even a bird song. If a rabbit had run by, the sound of his feet would have been like a little thunder.

Miss Witlov said jestingly, "It's easy to understand why the Irish believe in fairies and leprechauns. This is exactly the place one might expect to encounter them!" Some days later someone mentioned to us that Kerry is leprechaun headquarters. Miss Witlov's acute perception had already discovered it.

At Waterville we lunched and rested for a while. The Butler Arms at Waterville is a haven and a solace to weary trippers. Miss Lawless, a slim, gentle, white-haired lady, is the hostess and she has a comical understanding of the peculiarities of Americans. In the vast black-walnut dining room a great bay window lets in a glorious view and a few piercing blasts of chilly air. Before my friend and I could give one preliminary shiver, Miss Lawless was beside our table and had plugged in a comforting electric heater. We relaxed happily then, and had a fine lunch of sea trout and beef. They gave us some excellent brown bread, too—not brown bread as we know it in America, but a coarse-grained bread made from cracked wheat. It had an unusual nutlike flavor.

The Butler Arms advertises itself as the hotel "Where Anglers Meet." Even if you don't meet an angler—and Miss Witlov and I didn't care in the least whether we met one or not—you'll find that Miss Lawless knows how a good hotel should be run, and angler or no, you'll be comfortable, warm and well fed.

Our stopover that night was to be Tralee, and after a long afternoon skirting Dingle Bay and watching the breaking waves dash high on that stern and rock-bound coast, we were glad finally to reach the home of the Rose of Tralee. The hotel where we had made reservations turned out to be an elderly place of Early McKinley architecture. Miss Witlov looked at it with misgivings.

"I don't think so," she murmured. But she went in to investigate, nevertheless. I was so weary from the day's adventures that I was

willing to leave everything to her. As usual with her, by late afternoon she was at her most alert and cheerful. She returned looking rather grim.

"There's no lift," said she, and by the tone of her voice and the tilt of her head, I knew Tralee was cooked.

My friend Miss Witlov is an intrepid traveler. She could, I think, endure the hardships of a Sherpa, if she had to. She could live in a pup tent—if she had to. But if a hotel pretends to *be* a hotel, and Miss Witlov honors it with her custom, then it had better deliver the goods, or answer to Miss Witlov. (There was one memorable occasion when we had made reservations at a famous castle now turned commercial hotel. Miss Witlov, standing amid what amounted to grandeur, was unimpressed. Some rather ordinary amenity seemed to her to be lacking. She rapped sharply with her umbrella on the clerk's desk. "Call *this* a castle!" she remarked witheringly.)

Therefore, when she turned thumbs down on a hotel in Tralee, I knew we were in for another hour or two on the road.

"This hotel won't do, Sean," I said to our driver. And Sean, that perfect man, that gem of discretion and good temper, merely said, "Very good, madam."

"Do you know of a better hotel near here?" asked Miss Witlov, wiping all historic Tralee off the map.

A kind of gleam came into Sean's eyes. He didn't exactly grin, but there was an air of mirth about him.

"Oh, I do, all right," he said, and his voice squeaked up into an Irish falsetto that it took on whenever he was excited or amused.

"Then *that's* fine," said Miss Witlov, comfortably. "I knew we could depend on you."

So on we went, into the deepening twilight, happy to be in the care of this responsible and knowing man. And after a little while, we drove into the dooryard of an inn and came to a smooth halt.

We were in Killarney.

And Sean was laughing himself sick.

All day we had driven around the Kerry peninsula, mile after mile after mile. And we had not retraced an inch of it. Yet here we were, back in Killarney. The explanation was simple. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Cutting across the neck of the Kerry peninsula and driving straight from Tralee to Killarney was a mere matter of twenty miles or so.

It was a fitting cap to our Killarney holiday, and we spent one more night in Beauty's Home, Killarney, before heading North for the West.

West

There must be something special about the word "west." In America, the Wild West, the Far West and even the West Coast of modern times stimulate the imagination and enliven us. Soldiers speak of "going West" when they mean embarking upon the last great adventure. And in Ireland, as elsewhere, the West is something unique, something definitely exceptional.

Miss Witlov said to me, "Have you noticed that when one speaks about the West of Ireland, there comes a strange, secretive look into people's faces? They look at each other and smile and it's a queer sort of smile. What's it all about, I wonder?"

Well, I wondered, too, because as Miss Witlov said, an unexplainable something happened when we spoke to Irish people about their West. Later, when we traveled through Galway and Connemara, we did not wonder that they looked secretive when questions were asked about that part of Ireland. But we never found out what any of the secrets were; we never even remotely approached understanding the West. And the chances are very good that if you were not born and raised there, you won't, either.

We enjoyed Galway for many reasons, not the least being that we stayed at the Great Southern Hotel. This is a bleak monster of a place, that looks, from the outside, like a Victorian railroad

station. It turned out to be the homiest hotel we had discovered for some time. We were warm there; we got good food there; and we, two ladies traveling without benefit of male companions, were granted prompt and cheerful service by good-natured waiters and maids. In the rest of the world, ladies traveling alone are sometimes given the back of the hand when it comes to service. Not at the Great Southern Hotel.

Our first evening in Galway, we went into one of the public sitting rooms after dinner. A regal fire was leaping in the grate. The room was filled with traveling men, many of whom were busy writing home or making out expense sheets for their long-suffering employers. There was a buzz of lively though subdued conversation and the room was blue with smoke. I was afraid Miss Witlov might not care to sit where second-hand tobacco fumes had to be inhaled, but I rather wanted to sit there awhile to see how the traveling Irish travel. But I need not have worried about my friend. She pattered the length of the room, found a comfortable seat near the fire, crossed her small feet and smiled beatifically at me.

"Well," she said perkily, "this is something like. Everybody cheerful, everybody alert and alive, and best of all, a real good fire. I think this hotel is wonderful!"

It added strength to our legs and keenness to our eyesight to sally forth daily from such a comfortable rest house. And when people urged us to visit the Aran Islands, just off Galway at the entrance to Galway Bay, we paid them no mind at all. The Irish names of the Aran Islands caressed the ear: Inishere, Inishmaan and Inishmore. But we were content merely to hear the names.

"Ah, you mustn't miss the Aran Islands," people cried. "Life is harder there than anywhere else in the world!" It was surely not about the Aran Islands that Tom Moore wrote the lovely lines:

Islets so freshly fair
That never had bird come nigh them

But from his course through air
Hath been won downward by them.

Miss Witlov and I were thoroughly agreed about investigating the hard life. What we wanted was a soft life and plenty of it, so we left the Aran Islands well alone and trotted back to our cozy Great Southern Hotel after our days of sightseeing around the city of Galway.

We found Galway slow-moving and sedate and Miss Witlov and I sincerely hoped it would stay that way. We did not agree with the traveler who, visiting the city in 1919, wrote wistfully that Galway had an air of tranquillity and repose, but he hoped that it would not always be so, that a brighter and more prosperous future lay before it.

When we rode or walked through the narrow, twisting streets and some of the ancient alleys, we saw the effects of long use and habitation. We were told that in the olden days Galway had always had commerce with Spain. My geography being what it is, it seemed very strange to me that a city in western Ireland should have had great commercial dealings with Spain. It was only after consulting a map that I realized that Spain is just around the corner from Galway and easily accessible.

The Spanish influence on the city is everywhere apparent, in the architecture as well as in many other aspects of its life. Many of the houses are built Spanish fashion, around an open courtyard. There are arched entrances and stone stairways. There are stone carvings adorning the old walls, grotesque little figures and coats of arms and the famous elaborate interlaced designs so dear to the Irish. Much of this ornamentation has disappeared through the centuries, and some of it is ruined and crumbling, but sharp eyes can still spy out enough of it to see what old Galway must have looked like.

Perhaps the most famous of these little ornaments is on the wall

of the old Lynch mansion in Shop Street. The carving is high on the front wall and represents a small ape holding a human child. The story is that this ape, a Lynch household pet—probably brought over from Spain—saved the baby from a fire that nearly razed the house. The family, in gratitude for the ape's quick thinking and brave action, immortalized the little creature in stone.

I don't believe this story, but the ape and the child are up there on the wall just the same.

In all our wanderings around the city, Miss Witlov and I never saw a building made of anything but stone. "Cheap as stone in Galway" is a saying that certainly must be based on fact. When the silvery Irish sunshine falls on the yellowish surface of the old stone walls, it makes a golden glow that is very beautiful. Many of the proud old mansions remain, now in use as banks or public buildings of one kind or another. I have been told that the scale of living was so luxurious in the days of Galway's glory that the owner of one of these great houses sometimes left one floor, or even one grand room, as an inheritance. Later, when sad and depressed times came upon Galway—and all Ireland—many families huddled together in each apartment of the fine houses, sharing expenses and living facilities. This practice continues even today, as it does, of course, in many large cities, including New York.

The ancientness of these buildings, all of them in use, always comes as a great surprise to Americans. The Lynch mansion for instance, is supposed to date from about 1320, and there are others equally old, yet even today people live and work in them. Some of the buildings have been repaired and restored, but the majority are sinking gently into the last stages of deterioration and decay. Dampness seeps through the walls, the stone halls and stairways give off musty and fusty odors of the senility that attacks old buildings. But there they stand, and people call them home. And moreover, there is a dignity and grace about the old wrecks that only age and former majesty can bestow.

In America we usually apologize for a building over twenty-five

years old. A New York apartment house thirty years old is pointed out as a quaint relic of ancient days. In Ireland, however, and in Galway particularly, thirty years makes a building practically an embryo.

To wander through the Galway of today, with all these old buildings and the strange byways and the battered waterfront, makes one wonder whether there has been much change there, through the centuries. True, the people do not look old-fashioned or quaint; we had expected cloaked women sitting in doorways using spinning wheels and men in knee britches and billycock hats dancing hornpipes on street corners. But the sedate citizens of Galway did not look much different from people in small American cities who go about their affairs in their everyday clothes. Yet there was *something* different; something that must have been planted long ago and had come to fruition through long and difficult years.

I tried to search out the answer for this difference. I found plenty of records of Galway's past, and in the process of this search, I found that I had unwittingly opened a Pandora's box. It became more than gently amusing, it became downright hilarious to read, in brittle and yellowing books, the furious disagreements of Irish historians and scholars. I seemed to hear rising from the printed pages a tiny, virulent clamor in English, Gaelic and Latin, shrill and irate voices of men now dead and gone, who challenged one another's opinions on every point, no matter how trivial, and attempted angrily to substitute their own versions of what had happened.

I read one author who said cautiously, "In examining Irish history it is well to procede slowly, as false lights glimmer at every step of the way." I, emerging bewildered from a careful examination of the records, can only say in heartfelt agreement, "Professor, you said a mouthful!"

Keeping as cool a head as I could under the circumstances, and being wary, as I had been bidden to be, I gathered information

from many sources. And hereinafter follows a History of the West of Ireland by a non-Irish, non-Catholic, non-classical, non-scholar. And there will be one thing about this new history that no Irishman, living or dead, will be able to dispute or refute: my intense interest in my subject.

The history of Galway shows as many ups and downs as the graphic of a sales campaign. But like the red line of "par," one characteristic remains steady and plain through the centuries. Galway—although nobody would guess it today—was always a riotous hotspot and a wide-open town.

The site of Galway has been inhabited by man since at least 323 B.C. Ptolemy (the one who ruled Egypt at that time) mentioned a town that has been identified as Galway. In 1142 A.D., a fort was in active use where Galway now stands, but it evidently wasn't much good as a defense, because in 1232 some Anglo-Normans came down upon the settlement and took the place over. They chased out the native Irish and told them to keep out, and they set themselves up in as exclusive and snobbish a crowd as the D.A.R., the Mayflower Society and the Century Club combined. They enacted a law which said flatly: "Neither *O* ne *Mac* shall strutte ne swagger through the streets of Galway." Any strutting and swaggering that was done, the Anglo-Normans did. They called themselves the Tribes and Galway came to be known as the City of the Tribes. The following families constituted the Tribes:

Blakes
Bodkins
Brownes
D'Arcys
Ffrenches
Kirwans
Joyces
Lynches

Morrisses
Martins
Skerrets.

They took over and ruled the city, and even today the imprint of their power can be seen upon the history of Galway.

The native Irish took this high-handedness for a while, but after thinking it over they decided that they had had enough of it. So they gathered themselves together and came back in force and showed the Anglo-Normans what a good Irish fight could be like. And they came back so often and with such enthusiam and vigor that one of the Tribesmen caused to be written over the West Gate of the city: "From the fury of the O'Flahertys Good Lord deliver us."

Things got settled down after a while, and the native Irish went about their business and left the ruling of the town to the Tribesmen. Galway was a city of merchants and mariners, fishermen, tradesmen and smugglers. The members of the Tribes were of the ruling classes and used to holding office and directing affairs of state. So, very much like the people in America today, the Galway people who were too lazy and indifferent to care who sat in the seats of the mighty let the professionals have those seats. Until, of course, something went wrong, when they damned the politicians, even as you and I.

Very early in their history, Spain and Galway met and exchanged merchandise and culture. Galway people still take pride in their Spanish ancestry; and even if they did not take pride in it, they could scarcely hide it, for Galway people are the black Irish and show the presence of Spanish genes by their black hair and dark skins. The hot Spanish blood could only have added pepper to the already fiery Irish temperament, for in olden times Galwaymen were terribly quick on the draw, fierce-tempered and quarrelsome, not easily appeased and with an unsatiable taste for dueling. The Galwayman's reputation as a swordsman was twofold. Not only was he an expert swordsman in the generally

accepted meaning of the term—quick-footed, keen-eyed, supple and fearless—but he fought many of his duels on horseback, the opponents riding at each other full gallop, ancient jousters with swords instead of lances.

When a man left home of a morning or an evening, his wife and children never knew whether they would see him alive again. The twisted sense of dignity and honor affected by the so-called gentlemen of that time egged them into wrangles over the most trivial matters and the wrangle usually ended in a duel. It must have been a bitter business, being married to a Galwayman in the days of poniard and dueling sword. And after taking a careful look at the granite jaws and icy eyes of some of the modern male citizens of Galway, I have concluded that even today it is perhaps no cinch.

The people of Galway were always prodigious drinkers and carousers. They bred famous fighting cocks and bet foolish sums upon them. The businessmen of the early days were known as sharp dealers and the man who put over the shadiest deal was one to be greatly respected. The only time a city merchant ever met his match was when some poor, innocent country fellow came to town to peddle his produce. A rather pathetic record of these wily outlanders remains. Somebody—perhaps somebody who had been well trimmed in a deal—wrote: "The country people are full of lies and deceit; they never pay their debts; they steal everything they can lay their hands on yet they are never brought to justice." He went on to say that in his opinion a Galway blackguard surpassed all other ragamuffins throughout the world, that there was an effrontery and a depth to such a person's blackguardism that vagabonds in other lands could never hope to equal.

Yet amid all this skulduggery and dishonesty there was in Galway a breed of gentlemen whose honor was unimpeachable and whose dignity and cool disdain for charlatans were unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Such an Irish gentleman was con-

sidered in every civilized country to be the most polished, gracious and agreeable of his class.

There is a story about one such gentleman, a mayor of Galway, living there in elegance and pride more than five hundred years ago. The tale is so well known that I almost hesitate to repeat it, but it illustrates so perfectly the perfect Galway gentleman that I am going to take a chance and tell it once more.

This story has, as Hollywood might say, everything. It is tragedy in the purest Greek sense, the drumbeat of doom sounds incessantly through it. It has beautiful young people and handsome, sophisticated elders. It has wealth and life among the extravagant upper classes. It has young love, violence, death and implacable high honor. It has everything, this story, including a rather bewildering follow-up. So here it comes, the story of James Lynch Fitz-Stephens and his son Walter.

A rich Galway merchant named James Lynch Fitz-Stephens was elected mayor of Galway in 1493. The office of mayor was an extremely important and honorable one in those days, and the fact that Fitz-Stephens was already of high standing in the community added sparkle to the situation. During his term of office Fitz-Stephens went to Spain to visit some merchants with whom he had long had business associations, and he was greeted so heartily and treated with such overwhelming hospitality by the wealthy Spanish family that he longed to make some adequate return. To this end he invited the young son of the Spaniards to accompany him back to Galway as his guest. The Spanish youth, pride and heir of the Gomez family, was well brought up, accomplished, handsome and elegant. James Fitz-Stephens also had an only son, his idol, a highly gifted, comely young man, but dissipated and quick-tempered. The mayor of Galway hoped that young Gomez, who was virtuous and honorable, would have a good influence on Walter Fitz-Stephens.

At first the Spanish family could not bring themselves to permit their young heir to leave home; but at last they overcame their

fears and permitted him to go with the Irishman. Gomez was greeted as warmly at Galway as his host had been in Spain. The Irish merchant's house became his home, and he and Walter Fitz-Stephens became excellent friends and good companions.

Walter Fitz-Stephens was in love with the beautiful young daughter of one of the richest and most respectable families of Galway, and it was a source of supreme gratification to both families to know that the young people were to be married. A great many parties and receptions were given in honor of the charming young couple, and naturally the Spaniard Gomez was always among the guests invited.

One evening Walter Fitz-Stephens, as usual tense and impulsive and this time perhaps with a little too much to drink, imagined that he saw his lovely Agnes looking lovingly at Gomez. He was immediately inflamed with jealousy and upbraided the girl, harshly accusing her of preferring Gomez to himself. Agnes, surprised at his manner and outraged by his charge, was too offended to reply and withdrew in haughty silence.

The next night Walter, still seething with jealousy, prowled around Agnes' house, unable to bring himself to call upon her and apologize, yet unable to stay out of her neighborhood. Then, as a final goad to his fury, Walter saw Gomez leave Agnes' house and at once leaped to the not unreasonable conclusion that the Spaniard had been calling upon Agnes. This, however, was not true. Agnes' father had invited Gomez to spend the evening with him. The older man had been studying Spanish and enjoyed practicing that language with anyone who could speak it well. Gomez was completely innocent of any association with Agnes.

As Gomez came out into the street, Walter Fitz-Stephens, half-crazy with jealousy, hoarsely challenged him to stop. Gomez, not recognizing the voice but frightened by the wild tone of it, raced off into the darkness. Not being sure of the way, he became confused in the blackness of the streets, and at last got into a rough part of the town bordering on the sea. Walter, close to the

Spaniard's heels and quite out of his mind with rage, ran the youth through with a poniard and pushed the body into the water.

The instant the murder was committed, Walter was filled with remorse and fear. He fled from the scene and hid himself in the woods, where he remained for several days.

But the ocean did not conceal his crime. The incoming tide flung the body of the poor murdered boy back on the beach. It was found and recognized and the news was carried to the mayor, Walter's father. Knowing how unstable his son was, James Lynch Fitz-Stephens gradually became suspicious that Walter had committed the crime in a fit of rage. His suspicions became stronger when his son did not appear. He formed a posse and, leading the group on horseback, went to find his boy. Walter, who had decided to give himself up, met his father and the others as he was walking back to town.

Walter confessed his guilt without hesitation. He was taken at once to the jail and kept there until he could be tried. James Fitz-Stephens was naturally disconsolate, but his sense of justice made him handle the situation with unyielding integrity. He sat in judgment on his son and condemned him to die.

By this time public opinion had veered to the defense of Walter. When it became known that the mayor had condemned his own son there were riots, and plots were laid to help the youth to escape. Completely heedless of the clamor for mercy and the overwhelming demands for a reprieve of the death sentence, Fitz-Stephens had a heart-rendering last meeting with his son, during which he prayed with him and blessed him. Then, with his own hands he placed the rope around the young man's neck. He tied one end to an iron projecting from the jail wall, embraced his son and "launched him into eternity."

Near the Church of St. Nicholas is the site of the Old Jail where this all took place. Set into the wall is a black marble skull and crossbones, with an inscription, still legible, recounting the sad affair.

It is puzzling to consider that nobility and inflexible adherence to the written law as practiced by this noble old man should have come to represent savage mob hysteria. "Lynch law" in America today means taking the law out of the hands of those qualified to administer it and twisting it to suit hysterical mob rule. There is nothing legal or moral about a "lynching." Quite the contrary. James Lynch Fitz-Stephens, a man of such sterling honor that the existing law was to him the final word even when it involved the hanging of his own son, has given his name to savage lawlessness. Who can explain how this came about?

Throughout the 1500's and the early 1600's the pace of life accelerated in the stone city by the sea. The line of the graph indicating glory began to climb to an all-time high. Galway became second only to London as a center of shipping and commerce and the purses of the people and the people themselves grew fat. "Proud as a Galway merchant" was a saying that went the rounds. All the residents of Galway were proud and lively.

People poured into the city from everywhere. Every mansion was filled with guests, every inn was stuffed with travelers, all the houses were full of people to the very eaves. Strolling players paraded through the streets and set up shop on convenient corners. As usual, drinking, cockfights and all the other amusements that attract blithe spirits were going full force. Galway was Sodom-and-Gommorrah, Babylon-by-the-Sea, a city full of sinners who lived for the day and lived the day to the limit.

But the line on the graph suddenly sloped downward.

Overcrowded to bursting, Galway became filthy. Nobody cared. Then in 1640 a horrible plague broke out and ravaged the city, killing thousands of the inhabitants. Those who were spared fled away into Connaught and Connemara and took the plague with them, and the country people, too, were stricken and died.

Things were desperate in those years of the plague. The disease abated but another scourge in the shape of Oliver Cromwell's

fanatical Protestant agents came upon enfeebled Galway at the same time.

England intended to clear the Irish from the city of Galway as completely as Hitler intended to clear Germany of Jews. Galway and the surrounding countryside were to be resettled by English pioneers. In London fine offers of cheap land had been made to English citizens who wanted to settle in Ireland and live the life of O'Reilly. For three hundred pounds a man could buy an estate of a thousand acres; if he lacked three hundred pounds, he could buy one acre for six shillings. There were plenty of eager takers-up of these bargains; they were called "Cromwell's Adventurers" and they saw themselves as Irish squires, lording it over broad acres of their own. But first the land had to be cleared of the Irish.

An edict was published in Galway which told the people of the city that they must leave at once—for Connaught or for hell, since their room was more desired than their company. They were given a week or so to dispose of their property and possessions, and then no excuse would be accepted. A few old and sick people were given permission to remain, but later these, too, were driven out. Bewildered and aghast, the people of Galway streamed away into the bleak shore counties of Clare to the south and Connaught and Connemara to the north. Many left in such haste that they had only the clothes on their backs and those clothes were not adequate to shield them from the bitter weather of the seacoast wastes.

Besides being almost depopulated by the plague, the country into which these city dwellers were forced was the bleakest and least habitable in all Ireland. One man wrote sadly that there was not wood enough to hang a man, water enough to drown him nor earth enough to bury him in that part of the world. The refugees from the city probably longed for death by any means, and found it soon enough, in many cases.

The owners of the beautiful stone mansions of Galway were hunted into thorny thickets and hedges. They and the other

citizens of Galway were received into the poor cabins of those native countrymen who remained; others found refuge in the little stone huts that the plague had left standing empty. Death and terrible suffering and fear laid heavy hands upon them all. And now even these trembling survivors were hunted out by the English soldiers, and were herded into packs and driven back to Galway city where they were flogged aboard waiting ships and sent as slaves to Barbados, never to be heard of again.

After one of these raids a Cromwellian soldier reported proudly to his officer that in a thirty-mile march through Connemara neither he nor his fellows had seen one living creature, not even a bird.

The proud stone mansions of Galway were now occupied by drunken soldiers who ravaged and despoiled them as beautiful buildings have been ravaged and despoiled by drunken soldiers from the beginning of time. The furnishings were broken up for firewood, the glass in the windows smashed for amusement and noise, floors and walls scarred and disfigured wantonly. Galway, empty of its former citizens, lay helpless and bewildered under the heel of the conquerors.

The hoped-for resettlement of the city by the English never took place. Something went wrong somewhere. Galway climate or Galway character proved too tough for the high-handed Adventurers, and after a while they withdrew and only desolation remained where they had been.

Yet such is the resilience of the human race and such is the magical power of some places on the earth to attract and support human life, that in less than a hundred years Galway was resettled by the Irish, rebuilt to a great extent, renovated and restored and going full blast again as the little Paris of the West. The line on her graphic chart was climbing up again to another fine peak of gay living and general waywardness. By the early eighteen hundreds, Galway was again a ring-tailed roarer.

In addition to two theatres, all kinds of excitements and amuse-

ments were available; Galway was the seat of society, and the resort of the gentry. Although detailed accounts are available of what went on at that time, and I have read them, I must admit that I am bewildered and amazed by the records. The best thing to do is to quote verbatim and let the reader judge for himself: "There are public assemblies daily. When the ladies are dressed, it is called an assembly. When half-dressed, it is called a drum; when undressed, a promenade. The price of entry is according to name. The greatest ease and gaiety prevails. The belles of Galway can certainly instruct the French ladies in coquetry."

I feel certain that there are no such goings-on in Galway today. It is apparently a sober, hard-working city with little gaiety. It seems to be trying conscientiously to make a place for itself in the modern world of commerce, although it is, no doubt, far from ranking next to London as a trading place. Its commerce is as it always has been, much concerned with the sea. It exports herring and salmon and its factories produce fish nets and rope. Along the seashore you still may see the seaweed gatherers; seaweed is used in medicine and toothpaste. But in addition to these products, Galway is beginning to manufacture hosiery, agricultural implements and furniture. Perhaps, as a Galway merchant said cheerfully to me, "Oh, sure, maybe our future is all ahead of us!"

Galway is not only a seacoast town; it is a river town, too. The Corrib River, the outlet from two big fresh-water lakes, runs through the middle of Galway city. It has been known for hundreds of years for its superb salmon fishing. I always thought salmon fishing was something that required long and careful preparation: hip boots, funny hats, expensive fishing rods and nets, boats, guides and long treks into the wilderness. That's not the way it is in Ireland and certainly not the way it is in Galway. Magnificent fishing can be had by standing on the old stone bridge or just below it, right in the city.

It seems to me that a salmon ought to have enough on its mind just fighting its way up the rushing Corrib River to get to the

I don't mean mentally bright—though no doubt they are; young people come from all over Ireland to this old school, to perfect their Gaelic or to take various degrees in it, as well as to study other subjects. By bright I mean that their faces and their manners and their clothing are bright, and enliven the whole atmosphere of the ancient university.

The fresh, dewy beauty of the Irish girls and women was a continual source of surprise and delight to us. The dazzling skin, the large, clear eyes, the shining hair and, above all, combined with this exquisite loveliness, a modest demeanor, gentle and touching. The Galway woman, like the Irish woman everywhere in this delightful country, is crowned with innocence and goodness as with a chaplet of May flowers. Whatever else she may have, virtue glows around her like an aura.

The day we drove through the University grounds we saw several groups of young men lounging and talking together. As we drove slowly past one such group, a dainty coed, bareheaded and wearing a smart sweater and skirt, walked past the boys. She walked modestly, without self-consciousness or swank, very different from our own high-stepping, high-headed, haughty young American princesses. And not one of the men students glanced her way, or stopped talking for a moment. Not a masculine eye rolled in her direction; it was as if that charming girl did not exist.

If she had been a dainty little mare, now, a well-set-up Irish filly, those boys would have trod on one another's toes to evaluate and admire her good points. A horse—any time! A girl—practically never. That's how it is in Ireland. There is even an Irish proverb which states blandly, "It's unlucky to marry for love." And the Scotch have a saying, "As loveless as an Irishman." The men students of Galway bear out both these old sayings.

The Church of St. Nicholas, in Lombard Street, is dedicated to the patron saint of mariners and others who have their business with the sea. I don't know whether this is the same St. Nicholas

who brings toys to children on Christmas in America; if so, he must be a very busy saint. His great big gloomy church on Lombard Street is worth a visit anyhow; I know, because I went down there and looked it over thoroughly.

Mr. James McLaren is the guide who piloted me. The vast stone structure takes a visitor immediately from the comparative warmth and cheer of Lombard Street into semidarkness and chill. I suppose only an American would wonder why a human being should be required to endure long hours of this bone-chilling cold, as Mr. McLaren must. In America (where there is a completely unique regard and care for a worker's comfort), somewhere at the back of the church there would be at least a small boothlike shelter with a wooden floor and an electric heater, where the guide could retire for a rest and a bit of a warm-up when he was not guiding in the church. There is nothing of the kind provided by the Church of St. Nicholas, and when Mr. McLaren is not going about the business of showing the church, he probably has to crouch in a pew. It must be like living in a deep-freeze.

Mr. McLaren appealed to me in much the same way that Miss Joan Coffee, of Kate Kearney's Cottage at Killarney, did. They are very different, but both interesting people. Mr. McLaren is a large, hearty, red-faced gentleman. Even long hours inside dark St. Nicholas Church cannot dim the radiance and ruddiness of that face and nose. It must be the Irish climate. He is a graduate of a Scotch public school the equivalent of Eton, he says. He has lost his Scotch burr through the years and has an accent now that seems faintly Australian.

Mr. McLaren is crippled to the extent of having somehow lost one arm. It is no matter to be flippant about, certainly, and I do not mean to seem so. I was curious to know how this appalling thing had happened, but did not wish to broach the subject. Later, however, after half an hour or so in Mr. McLaren's company, I should not have been the least bit surprised if he had told me that his

arm had been bitten off by a whale. Mr. McLaren has lived a full life and has had adventures.

He takes his work in the church very seriously and has done a great deal of reading and research in connection with it. His attitude toward the church is reverent, but it is a reverence overlaid with complete understanding. As his big blue eyes turn here and there over his domain, you feel that he is in complete command. His job is to guide and instruct; and when you finish a turn around the church under his supervision, let me tell you, you have been guided and instructed.

Occasionally a visitor (usually an American) will be so impressed by Mr. McLaren's lordly personality and pungent erudition that he will hesitate to offer a tip for services rendered, in addition to making a contribution toward the maintenance of the church. Mr. McLaren regards this as a serious mistake.

He is priceless right where he is; but if the Irish Tourist Bureau is looking for an exceptional courier and guide, it could do no better than to employ McLaren. Americans in particular would relish his unique talents. He is jovial, ironic, patient, and makes listening to facts a pleasure. And when he strays into the realm of the imaginary, he really cooks with radar. Tourists would clamor for him.

If you are seriously interested in facts and statistics about the church, Mr. McLaren can and will supply them. If you wish merely to fool around and drift aimlessly in the old church, he does not force information upon you. But don't go admiring the wrong things. Mr. McLaren can't stand it if you admire the wrong things.

Take the stained-glass windows, for instance. Back of and beside the altar are tall windows the designs of which are largely made of red glass. I thought the light filtering through them into the gray church was lovely. Mr. McLaren turned my attention gently away to the windows in the other wall. These windows are of cooler color and plainer and in much better taste than the rosy,

overornamented windows from Munich, which I had almost admired right out loud.

There is a legend that Christopher Columbus worshiped in the Church of St. Nicholas before he sailed off to discover America—with a Galway man at the helm, by the way. Somehow I had the feeling that I had better not inquire what Mr. McLaren thought of this story. I had made a bad enough mistake in the matter of the stained-glass windows, without sticking my neck out again.

The Church of St. Nicholas was presumably erected to the glory of God. But even the most casual visitor must come to the conclusion that in years gone by the Church of St. Nicholas also contributed largely to the glory of the Lynch family. The Lynches were prominent members of the Tribes of Galway and you will find memorials to them and reminders of them all over the Church of St. Nicholas. On the east wall of the south transept is a private altar called the Lynch Family Altar, and nearby is an epitaph to Stephannus Lynch, who died in 1644. It reads:

He came of an illustrious family, was the darling of his soldiers, the terror of his enemies, a young man in years, an old man in all the virtues. This world not being worthy of him, he was lifted up to heaven.

The grand family tomb once had a stone canopy and is much ornamented with stone bas-relief. There is a three-leaved design that Mr. McLaren will point out to you. "Do *not* think it is a shamrock," he says severely. "It's clover, clover. The Lynches had the clover crest long before they came to Ireland at all." The Lynches were Normans and for one reason and another they fell upon very lean times. Wandering around, they were in such reduced circumstances that they were forced to eat herbs and the grasses of the fields—among which was clover. In honor of the way clover had stood by the Lynch stomach in hard times, they adopted it as part of their crest. Clover must be full of vitamins of the right kind, for the clover diet enabled the Lynches to land

in Ireland and become people of substance and importance in Galway. Eighty-four mayors of Galway have been Lynches, including the fine old man who hanged his own son.

The day I visited St. Nicholas Church the guest book showed signatures of visitors from California, Tokyo, Australia, Peiping and New York. Mr. McLaren is, as you can see, a very busy boy.

On the way back to the hotel, Sean O'Brien drove the car through High Street and there I blundered right into the middle of a Sean O'Casey play. High Street runs through a rather threadbare district, somewhat on the gloomy side, and opposite where we were driving I caught sight of a little pawnshop. I seldom pass the window of a pawnshop or of any junky little shop without looking into it. You never know, as my friend Sadie Frank, the antique dealer of West Eighty-fourth Street, New York, always says. When Sadie says, "You never know," it opens up outer space in bargains and mysteries. This time I was looking for the shawl pin of an ancient Irish king, pure gold, though naturally somewhat tarnished and discolored now. But a knowing eye, such as mine—or Sadie Frank's—would be able to see the precious metal and antique workmanship under the dirt and grime, and be able to discern the pigeon-blood rubies with which the ornament would be paved. Cast up by the tides of time—who knows how?—the bauble would be waiting for me to discover it. Naturally, the pawnbroker wouldn't have the slightest idea of its value or significance and he would toss it scornfully onto the counter and I would buy it for tuppence ha'penny. And live happily ever after.

Something must have gone wrong with the chain of events, however, because all that appeared behind the sooty glass were a broken rosary, a pile of brass safety pins and a pair of battered satin slippers, much frayed and discolored. I decided that the shawl pin of the Irish king was probably inside the shop and I went in to look for it.

I got a whiff of the old Claddagh and a momentary glimpse of what it must have been like. It was like a stage setting by Boris

Aronson—a small, murky room with one dim light that made more shadows than illumination. Shelves lined the walls from ceiling to floor. A group of women—most of them young, and all of them with shawls over their heads—stood laughing and chattering with a slender woman who was presiding over a small cash register. I had always thought the atmosphere of a pawnshop must be heavy with misery and filled with foreboding and the smell of tragedy. The atmosphere of this small shop was heavy, all right, but it was heavy with the combined smell of all the tattered and worn-out articles that filled the shelves and stood about the floor. Misery and tragedy were conspicuously absent.

In olden times, the village well was the center of gossip and visiting. The pawnshop on High Street seemed to have taken the place of the well. The women talked gaily—and Gaelic, probably. They spoke so fast, and they spoke in such soft, delightful Irish voices that I couldn't make out a word they said. They were as merry as crickets, those women, and they had an air that was almost greedy. They seemed to be really hungry for this conversation and companionship in the brownish light of the murky pawnshop. They seemed like drug fiends craving their stimulant. They threw themselves whole-heartedly into the conversation, and although they saw me and recognized me for a stranger, they paid no attention, but chattered away.

I was due for another surprise: the pawnbroker himself. He was not at all what I had thought a typical pawnbroker in a poor district of an Irish town would be like. I thought that of course he would be an oppressor of the poor, a grinder of faces in the dirt, a squeezer-out of hard-gotten pennies. This pawnbroker, who entered by a rear door, came into the store and was greeted like an old friend who had been delayed. He must be the handsomest pawnbroker in Ireland. He was tall, slim, and his white hair grew strong and bushy upon his noble head. His nose was strong and proud, classical, really, but he carried it mildly. He greeted his waiting public like a matinée idol. They looked at him with friendliness, almost with affection.

Nobody seemed to be putting anything *into* pawn. Everybody seemed to be giving the pawn man money and taking things *out*. This wasn't the way I had heard it, either. I thought poor women were always wringing their hands and begging the miserly moneylender for a penny or two more on their rags. Not these women. There seemed to be a kind of ritual dance going on, the figures of which were well known to all the dancers. The motions and gestures were almost automatic.

One young woman was getting back a man's suit. It was a thin, poor bit of cloth and seemed to have taken on permanently the shape of the hanger. It was a light-colored suit, and maybe had never been worn. She took it absently and slung it over her shoulder, holding the hanger by its hook. She never stopped talking, even when she handed some money to the lady at the cash register.

With the beelike hum of the women as obbligato, I moved around the shop to see what the stock was. There were many pairs of high rubber boots, some cracked and useless, some fairly new, but all smelling of fishermen and brine. There were piles of soiled and ragged clothing, also emitting odors. Proudly displayed on a hanger of its own and hanging free where its beauty could strike the eye, was a dusty sweater, its pink wool worn tissue-thin. "New, handmade, 15 shillings" ($1.80) said the caption. That sweater was old in 1902 and had been worn by a succession of careless owners ever since.

There was a well-worn copy of *The Road Round Ireland*, by Padraic Colum; several unattractive clocks, none in running order; a flimsy bedspread or so—and nowhere to be seen the pure-gold shawl pin of the ancient Irish king. I was disappointed. I just stood there for a minute watching the eager women, the handsome man, the serene woman at the money machine, and trying to understand the cheery nonchalance of these people who might all have been poverty-poor.

Then another woman entered. She was shawled, as all the others were, and she was young and very frail and worn. At her

heels pattered two children, and when she took her place among the other women the children leaned against her, waiting patiently. I looked down at these children and they were so delicate and slight that I hardly dared to breathe.

The boy's age (his mother told me later) was one and a half. The little girl was three years old. And it became clear to me at once that these were not human children; they were mer-children and lived in Galway Bay. Even then, in the dun light of the pawnshop, there was a pale blue aura around them. So tender-frail, they were, so desperately new, I dared not even nod, lest the breeze engendered by the movement of my head should blow them out the door.

The boy baby's head was foamed over with delicate silvery bubbles that were probably hair. The girl's hair, so fair it seemed to have no color, hung in lank, silken strands to her shoulders. Their eyes were a sapphire blue, but so quiet in the little pale faces. The little ones did not move away from their mother to investigate any of the marvels so close at hand. They stood; they waited. They did not even glance at me.

I wondered what the penalty for kidnaping in Ireland might be. I decided to sling one of these babies under each arm and leg it across the street to where Sean O'Brien sat waiting for me in the car. Sean, well accustomed by this time to American idiosyncrasies, would scarcely turn his head to see what I was up to this time. With one child under each arm I would leap into the car and somehow or other slam the door. "Step on the gas!" I would cry, and Sean would say mildly, "Very good, madam," and off we'd go, leaving High Street high and dry.

Somehow or other I would get those tender tots to America. And I'd wash them and comb them and dress them in things from Pat-Rick on Madison Avenue. And I'd stuff them full of orange juice and scraped beef and desiccated liver. And the blue-white of their faces would change to rose-pink and dimples would come across the backs of their thin, cold little paws. And they would

stomp on the floor and go roaring through the apartment, shaking the dish cabinets and smashing the hi-fi and making noises like machine guns. Their mother would never miss them—be glad to be rid of them, no doubt. And then that dreadful woman, by a mere gesture, shattered my dream and ruined her children's future in America.

Without turning around, she made a kind of searching movement with one hand, her fingers widespread, as if she were holding a bowl upside down. She bent her knees, still without turning, all in an accustomed and absent-minded way. And her hollowed hand came into contact with the little girl's head; came into contact with it and fitted over it, neatly. The mother was reassured and the little girl seemed comforted. The mother withdrew her hand and went on with her chitter-chatter, and in a moment her other hand came reaching, the knees bending, the open hand fitting over the moon-bright ringlets of the cherub boy. Maybe she'd miss the children after all. Maybe I'd better leave them.

Unnoticed when I came in, unnoticed while I had been there, I now turned to leave and nobody noticed my going. The mother turned instinctively when she heard a movement near the children and it was then I asked the ages of the little ones. She told me simply, and turned away again without curiosity or interest.

As I left the dark shop, the boy removed a damp thumb from the coral of his mouth and opened and closed his fist at me and whispered, " 'By." His sister, evidently alarmed that she had overlooked some amenity, raised her hand, too, and the last I saw of the changelings they were standing solemnly opening and shutting their hands at me, waving farewell. At least I suppose that's what they thought they were doing. They were looking at each other.

It was quite late in the afternoon when I got back to the hotel, and when I did not find Miss Witlov waiting in the lobby I went in search of her. I found her standing in her room, looking out of

her window rather blindly. She was so subdued and so unlike her eager and inquisitive self that I was frightened.

"What's the trouble?" I asked. "Are you ill?"

"No, not ill," she answered brokenly, "not ill. Just stupid. I didn't know I could *be* so stupid."

"Think nothing of it," I said airily. "Everybody's a little stupid sometimes. Even I am stupid sometimes, although that may be hard for you to believe."

She sighed a small, heartbroken sigh. She was not to be cajoled.

"I might as well tell you about it," she said. "I may feel better if I tell you about it. You see that—store—across the square? The third one from the end?"

From the window I saw a dingy saloon with the words "Jersey Bar" across the front.

"What about it?" I asked, bewildered.

"I thought I'd do some shopping today, after you'd gone out," Miss Witlov began. "I wanted to buy something really Irish for my friend Fanny. So I went over there"—her voice broke again—"and I went in and over to the counter and asked if they had a black jersey in size thirty-four . . . It was so dark in the place and then I saw that it was full of men and everybody was looking at me as if I were crazy or drunk! Well, dear me, at home we have millinery bars and cosmetic bars—I thought this was a *jersey* bar, but it's a café and everybody was drinking and they thought I was drunk!"

When the chambermaid who was mending the fire in the little fireplace in Miss Witlov's room heard my sudden yelp of laughter, she gave me one terrified look and fled away down the hall. Miss Witlov, whose small rose mouth had been turned down at the corners like a tiny, crescent-shaped piece of watermelon, put a delicate handkerchief against her eyes and her shoulders began to shake. Ten minutes later we were still helplessly laughing.

At dinner my friend said to me severely, "You know, it's not *good* for me to laugh so much. It wears me out. I'm afraid I'll get

sick from it. But oh, dear, I'll never forget the look on that barmaid's face when I told her I wanted a black jersey, size thirty-four!"

The guidebook says primly: "That part of Connaught lying to the west of Lakes Corrib and Mask, bounded on the west by the Atlantic and on the south by Galway Bay, is called 'Connemara.'"

It is as if an American guidebook said, "That part of the United States west of the Hudson River is known as the West." Not because of size, mind you—there's no compromise there—but just that those dry words convey nothing whatever of the crazy-quilt country lying beside a rough, forbidding sea.

Connemara has always been a catnip mouse for travelers—a pungent toy, to be chewed at and played with, but finally abandoned as too unrewarding to give lasting pleasure. Catnip mouse or no, it is to Connemara that a traveler's heart and mind return again and again in days to come.

There is no railroad through Connemara, although there was one for a short time. The description of that little spur of tracks is so Irish that I feel it should be quoted here: "The railroad avoided populous districts, brought no prosperity and has disappeared." The modern bus and motorcar have taken its place and do a much better job than the railroad ever did.

Traveling by bus or private car through Connemara will be interesting no matter how fast you go or how little you linger to look. But traveling Americans want to know what they are looking at. We are all from Missouri and don't you forget it. Maybe people of other nationalities are abashed or ashamed to follow along after a guide and ask questions, but seldom Americans. After we have spent the money and given the time to get to a certain place, we want to know all about it.

Nobody seemed to be able to tell us much about Connemara.

When I asked questions about it, the Irish all looked sly and didn't answer. They seemed to imply, "Well, now, if we told

you, then you'd know as much as we do." Naturally, they didn't want that to happen. On the other hand, to tell the truth, I don't think many Irish people know much about Connemara, just as a lot of people in Buffalo probably don't know much about Niagara Falls, and thousands of people in California don't know much about Hollywood.

World-famous Killarney had rather disappointed Miss Witlov and me. Little-known Connemara caught our imaginations and filled us with curiosity. I feel sure that any American passing through that lonely land will feel excited and stimulated by its strangeness and antiquity. But I especially urge any farmers from America, anybody in any way connected with agriculture and wringing a living from the earth (cattlemen, or even oil men), not to miss that peculiar part of Ireland. Farmers and farmers' wives, oil men, oil ladies, will understand vividly what it must mean to live among those rock-strewn fields.

Our own journey took place one pleasant day in May. Starting from Galway in midmorning, we drove slowly along winding, well-kept roads until, early in the afternoon, we came to Ballynahinch Castle, where we stayed the night. A short, easy trip by American standards.

By great good luck we had beautiful weather. The sunlight lay silver on new-springing grass. The air was soft and sweet from the sea. It has been said that breathing the air of Connemara is like breathing cream. This is a good Irish mixed metaphor, and it describes the air perfectly. Gigantic clouds as white and puffy as sky-sized feather beds floated through the tender blue of the sky. They stimulated Miss Witlov into propounding her theory of clouds.

"Clouds not only have definite characteristics," she told me, "they have definite and distinctive personalities. A French cloud, for example, is completely different from any other cloud, and I would know a Spanish cloud anywhere if it should happen to make a mistake and go floating over any other country. And I'm

sure that nowhere else in the world is there a cloud that looks like an Irish cloud. Don't you agree?"

At least in the case of the Connemara clouds, it would seem as though she were right. Paul Henry, the Irish Maxfield Parrish paints his Irish landscapes against a background of Irish clouds filling the skies as white-sailed fleets used to fill the sea. His little shy thatched cottages burrow into the gentle hillsides and the white mountainous clouds fill the sky behind them.

We saw one comical example of Connemara cloudishness that was certainly unique. Far out over the sparkling sea there drifted one strange, triangular cloud. In true Connemara style it did not drift toward or merge with any of the other stately travelers of the sky. Slowly, when it was quite clear of all of them, it began to roll itself into a kind of cornucopia and from its curling mouth there poured a cataract of rain that fell glittering into the ocean. It was as if the cloud said, "Ah, the devil with all this shilly-shallying, a shower here and a shower there! I'm full of rain and everybody knows it, so here goes with a good sharp downpour, and be done!"

Yet perhaps it was more than just comical, that downpour. Perhaps the sea and the opal sky of Connemara were sending us a message, drawing a rebus for us to decipher. Nirvana has been described as the slipping of the dewdrop into the sea—and here was a whole shower of diamond drops going home. Was the cloud spelling out some glorious communication to us, in code, that we were too doltish to understand?

Except when we drove through towns, we saw few people abroad that day—only a road gang of five or six men who straightened up and looked at us coldly and incuriously when we passed; a man driving a very small donkey with two big baskets strapped to its sides; a man dressed in a suit of the cream-colored hand-woven wool of the district, called bainin (pronounced bawneen). Although the people of Ireland who were driven into Connemara by Cromwell's men were mostly city people and

knew little about spinning and weaving wool, they learned, after a while. Now Connemara is one of the few places where these homely arts are still continually practiced. The fabric called bainin, off-white, hard-surfaced and very agreeable to look at or to touch, is being taken up by smart dressmakers of Dublin and made into tailored suits and town-and-country clothes for fashion-conscious customers. It has other uses, as well, it seems. I heard an Irish lady say that she had had bainin slip covers made for her furniture more years ago than she liked to think about. "They'll never wear out," she said peevishly. "The only way I'll ever be rid of them is to throw them away."

The man in the home-spun, home-made suit plodded along the narrow road and never even glanced our way. Then we met a tall girl in a shabby coat with a weather-beaten scarf over her head. We stopped beside her and Sean O'Brien asked her in his best Gaelic whether we were on the road for Costello. The young woman leaped back as though we might be a carful of adders. She turned white and then red, and made a stammering, unintelligible reply. She was frightened to be questioned by people in an automobile, and she did not know the road to Costello, although at that moment we were within a few miles of the town. Sean had asked for "Cos-*tel*-lo," and we found out later that he should have pronounced it "*Cos*-tel-lo." The girl spoke no English, only Gaelic, and evidently did not understand Dublin Gaelic, which is what Sean was trying to speak.

Connemara is one of the best centers for the old Gaelic. Many of the natives do not speak or understand English at all, and they laugh mockingly when people who have learned Gaelic in school try to talk to them in the old tongue. Students who go to Galway University to learn the language or to perfect their knowledge of it sometimes go out into Connemara to practice their hard-won skill. And the Connemara people say scornfully, "*Book* Gaelic," and repeat the phrase or the sentence differently and, according to them, correctly.

There is a little poem, translated from the Gaelic, that was written in the third century, by an Irish king. It shows that even in the third century Gaelic was held in high respect and it shows, too, that even in the third century there was uneasiness about its dying out.

Sweet tongue of our Druids and bards of past ages,
Sweet tongue of our monarchs, our saints and our sages,
Sweet tongue of our heroes and free-born sires,
When we cease to preserve thee, our glory expires.

The question of preserving Gaelic is an all-absorbing one in Ireland today. One faction wishes to replace English with Gaelic everywhere: street signs, newspapers, spoken language, books, everything. These people wish to resign entirely from the English-speaking world and create an isolated, nationalistic Irish society. They wish to regenerate the Gaelic language, restore Gaelic literature and enthrone all ancient Gaelic traditions and glories. Another faction believes that the days of the Gaelic glory are past and that Ireland's hope for the future lies in taking English for daily use, looking back on the old Gaelic world fondly and proudly but using it only as a foundation to build upon.

This fiery question (naturally, any discussion or difference of opinion in Ireland is fiery) gives the people of West Ireland no uneasiness at all. Probably they don't even know about it. They go about their affairs calmly, speaking purest Gaelic, isolated, imperturbable, aloof. The back pocket of Ireland is closed to politicians and scholars alike when it comes to accepting advice about speaking the Gaelic.

I found a matchless description of the Connemara country in a book called *In Search of Ireland*, by H. V. Morton. He wrote, "Connemara is the world's end. It is grey with hundreds of thousands of little stone walls. They run up to the edge of the

sky and fall into dips and hollows rising and falling like the lines of your hand. They guard the smallest fields in the world. Some are no larger than a dining table, some are triangular, some almost circular and to every one is its own breast-high wall so that the land is like a piece of tweed."

If we had had a Vermont or a New York State farmer in the car with us he would have known what those walls represented: back-breaking labor. Every stone in every stone wall had been lifted by hand from the ground where it lay, had been carried by hand to the fence and laid in its final resting place by hand. Although many New England fields are bounded by walls built by our own rugged ancestors from the native materials, the eyes of any visiting American farmer are sure to grow wide with astonishment when he views the walls of Connemara.

I kept asking who built the stone walls of Connemara until I felt as though I were composing a popular song along the lines of "Who Put the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder?" Nobody seemed to know. Even Mr. Morton, who had written of them so vividly, never mentioned who built the walls. It did not appear to us that those gray stripes across the landscape had been made one by one throughout the years. They all looked alike and we got the impression that at some time or other there had been a big wall-building program in Connemara. It was as though at some time there had been a gigantic W.P.A.; all the able-bodied men in the neighborhood had been inducted into labor teams, and placed at fixed intervals around the countryside. Then some overseer or foreman had blown a whistle and they had all started building like mad, without plan or pattern—and first man to complete his stint won a pony.

But before you have stone walls you have to have stones. Connemara has no problem there. Connemara *has* stones, so many it's a real wonder any are left over for the rest of the world. That rough and barren peninsula looks as though great cities had been blasted into rubble and the rubble left lying where it fell. Rocks

like skulls huddle so close together that only a bit of henna-colored moss or a peaked blade of grass can take root between them. Then there are the giant boulders that crouch here and there in the fields. Blockbusters, some of them, bigger than big houses. The geologists call them "erratics." (An erratic is a stone that had its origin somewhere else and was moved by some force of nature. The Swiss call such boulders "foundlings.")

One of these big erratics lies just outside of Galway in a place called Ballagh. This is considered to be one of the largest known. The Irish government had a piece blasted off the side of it to make a pedestal for a statue of William Dorgan in Leinster Square, Dublin. You can't awe an Irish government.

The age-old, everlasting stones lying in such profusion in Connemara have had legends made about them since earliest times. Fairies, spirits, even the devil himself have been charged for the responsibility of putting the stones there. Remembering the gaunt, grinning landscape in some parts of that country, I am rather inclined to agree with the bit about the devil. The fishermen have countless superstitions involving the stones: old charms are made on them; old tales are told about them.

Every great force of nature has impressed and influenced mankind. Men have been filled with wonder and worship by the appearance of the sun each day, by the disappearance of the sun each night; by moonrise, by moonset; by the stars. Great winds have been a great force in the life of man, storms have encompassed his spirit, lifted it up, bowed it down. Thunder and lightning have made indelible marks upon the history of the races. Superstitions, rituals, religions have grown up around the forces of nature and all natural things of the earth. Trees have been named gods; rivers have been called sacred. The ocean, the clouds have caught at the imagination and fear of man. Why not stones?

Perhaps the people of Connemara have learned through the centuries what many great mystics have maintained: that everything upon earth has spirit in some degree and that even a stone

is still a living organism and has a tiny ember of spirit glowing at its core. Perhaps each rock in Connemara has at its flinty heart an infinitesimal spark. Multiplied by the million, these feeble pulsations could give off potent vibrations of intelligence and light. Living for generations among these emanations, might not the people of the West develop unique characteristics and powers?

By night, when the blackness of the countryside is not pierced by even one star ray, when not one moonbeam is reflected from the sullen black waves of the encroaching sea, when the darkness is absolute and absolute silence prevails, perhaps the stones murmur together and sing. There may come a faint, wild music faltering on the sea air. There may be a stately, age-old dance of the stones, and perhaps the rough, secretive people there know it. Sitting beside their peat fires, behind the closed doors of the thatched cottages, they may feel an earthy tremor caused by that monstrous ballet.

The back pocket of Ireland is full of secrets, and no foreigner will ever be given even a glimpse of any of them.

These meditations and reflections gave me a certain amount of satisfaction, but I wondered whether there might not be a slightly more scientific explanation for the jumbled condition of western Ireland. When I returned to the United States, I went to Dr. Donald Squires, paleontologist of the New York Museum of Natural History, and without mentioning my own ideas on the subject, asked his opinion. Dr. Squires said that the explanation could only be ice.

Just ice.

It seemed so simple, after he got through telling me about it, that I felt like a big fool for not having included ice in my own theory.

At one time, millions of years ago, Dr. Squires told me, the entire top of the globe was covered by an icecap, some of it thousands of feet thick. This ice formed in the north and pushed its way south. In advancing, it picked up earth and rocks which

froze into the ice and became part of it. Moving south, these erratics were ground over the earth's surface, becoming broken and polished in the process. The polishing action of the glacier sometimes smoothed mountainsides so that the surfaces glitter like glass in the sunlight.

Ireland, lying near the southern edge of the icecap, was one of the last areas to be covered. Then, when for some reason not clear to me this vast ice mass began to melt, Ireland (and Connemara) was among the first to be uncovered, so that the earth and the stones that had been scraped free and carried south were deposited there. As the ice melted, powerful streams of icy water washed away light gravel and earth, and little footing was left for vegetation.

The ice that covered the West of Ireland was at one time so thick that high mountains were covered by it. I read a report by one geologist which said that on the very summit of Ben Gower, one of the Twelve Bens in Connemara, was glaciated rock with the typical deep scratches, proving that ice had been 2184 feet above sea-level. I didn't go up to verify his statement. I decided to take his word for it.

Ice, then, is Professor Squires's explanation of how the stones came to Connemara. How the stones finally got into the stone walls is another story entirely. Poor old Connemara had to struggle through many a difficult eon before the horny-handed bog men vainly attempted to transform their bitter land into harvest-bearing fields.

About the first humans known to have inhabited Connemara were a race of shore dwellers who lived almost entirely on shell-fish and who migrated up and down the coast according to how the food held out. They were small, gnarled, swarthy and rough. Then, from Asia Minor into Spain and from Spain into Connemara there slowly migrated a race called the Milesians. They were tall, dark and handsome; a race of giants, great navigators and builders. The shore-dwelling women must have been very

glad to see the Milesians, considering what the shore-dwelling men are supposed to have looked like. There seems to have been no hesitation about fraternization and the ensuing friendly relations produced a shore-dweller—Milesian who was the forefather of the present-day Connemara native.

Spanish mariners, Spanish pirates and other Spanish adventurers, including probably a few renegade Spanish grandees, came sailing over from Spain by the boatload as the years went by. With their genes of quick temper, courage and love of adventure added to the warlike, vigorous genes of the original shore dweller–Milesians, a race grew up that had the reputation of being too tough to tangle with. They kept themselves to themselves and the rest of the world was glad to let them alone. St. Patrick himself, wandering in that vicinity, found it expedient to bless that part of the country from a mountaintop, rather than descend into it and bless it from within. He was a prudent as well as a saintly soul.

Many a ship with precious cargo was lured to those craggy beaches by those villainous dwellers beside Connemara's sea. Fishermen they were, and later smugglers, but worse than all, many of them were wreckers, out-and-out evil desperadoes who made their living by murder and theft. It was easier to trick a ship to its doom than it was to try to make a living from the soil or from the sea itself as an honest fisherman. One particularly unpleasant practice was to tie a lantern to the neck of a pony or a donkey and drive it along the beach after nightfall. Mariners at sea, catching sight of the light bobbing along the shore, would think that it was on another vessel and would confidently sail into what they imagined were safe waters. They would go aground on the treacherous rocks and the happy Connemara men would wade out into the black water, murder the sailors and take over cargo and ship.

It was into this harsh and inhospitable place that the agents and soldiers of Cromwell drove the helpless inhabitants of Galway and other counties. The western country at that time was nearly

depopulated, for the plague had proved too much for even such rugged individuals as the wreckers and smugglers of the wasteland. The suffering of the displaced people was intense. Those who survived were, as always, the fittest to survive, and intermarrying with the Connemara people they passed along to their descendants the ability to live where more delicate people would perish. It was not only the males who were made of flint and steel. The women were fit mates for them. One story I heard proves that. Many years ago there was an emigrant ship that set sail for the New World out of Connemara, and the captain and crew deserted her in mid-ocean (where they deserted *to* in mid-ocean was not made clear). A volunteer crew from among the passengers was enlisted to take over command, and these volunteers took the ship safely to America. The volunteer captain was named Mary Fitzpatrick and the mate was the daughter of a well-known smuggler called O'Maille.

With smuggling, wrecking, fishing and some farming, life was rugged in the West until the 1800's. Then along came England's nice bloody wars with France and with America—and brought prosperity even to poverty-stricken Connemara. There was a market for everything and farm produce brought especially good prices. People began scrabbling around trying to raise all kinds of things—but the land had never been properly cleared and fields worth sowing were scarce. Somebody who owned a lot of useless land decided that under the stones there must be *some* soil and set about making plans for uncovering it. He took his idea to the banks, and the bankers, in jovial mood because of the nice wars, were willing to lend money for land improvement. With money in hand and labor available, the landlords of Connemara began to try to make fields. And that was the beginning of the stone walls that crisscross hill and dale from the edge of the sea to the foot of the mountains.

There was no place to put all those stones except into fences. The fences were made less to establish ownership or boundaries

than to get the stones out of the earth. Every able-bodied man in the country around became a wall maker. A man could earn a shilling for a perch of stone wall; a perch is a piece of wall five and a half feet long by one and a half feet thick by one foot high. When you consider the size of the stones used, you can understand that a man could build a perch of wall pretty quickly, especially when it was only laid on top of the ground, with no real foundation to worry about. The wall makers were probably able to build four or five perches a day—"if they were watched," one record says bitterly. The paupers of Connemara became practically millionaires!

Nearly a hundred and fifty years later the walls are still there, with the stones neatly in place, making giant spiderwebs across the hillsides. Whether the Irish fence menders are more conscientious than American, or the Irish fence builders built better than ours, who can say? Anybody who has seen the tumble-down, fast disappearing stone walls that mark off the fields across America knows that our old walls will not remain much longer. But the walls of Connemara still run straight and true.

Connemara is a land of terrible storms, biting winds and lashing ocean. People say that a storm there is something to remember. With awe-inspiring upheavals of surf and spray, even the first warning of such storms sends the fishermen scurrying for shore. Once upon a time a whole fishing fleet was swallowed up near the coast.

The winds that sweep across that land are so fierce that sometimes sea birds, helpless in the strength of the gales, are found far inland, battered to death against the mountainsides that face toward the sea. The little, low houses cling close to the ground and I suppose the storm-bound inhabitants must pray for the roof thatches. Sometimes the force of a blast of wind funneling down a narrow glen will lift a sheep and fling it down so roughly that it is killed by the fall. The little songbirds survive only be-

cause they instinctively hide away in the moss and cling to the roots of heather.

"There's the devil's own hunting in Connemara," a young Irishman told me. "They're wild riders, male and female, back there. In the old days—and they may still do it, for all I know—men and ladies both bound their legs round with thick pads of rags to prevent scraping against the walls or breaking the legs entirely. The horses take the fences like angels, and it's uncanny watching them running between the great rocks and the sharp, slippery little stones. The fox can hardly find himself a path, let alone a horse! It's a pastime for the gods!"

For the gods, the man said. The idea of being aboard a Connemara pony going hell-for-leather over those terrible fields is enough to chill the heart. I wonder how many ponies get broken legs during a hunting season. Nobody binds *their* legs with pads of rags, I'd like to bet.

It seems that the horses of Connemara as well as the people of that place are of Spanish ancestry. It is told that a whole boatload of Spanish and Arabian horses accompanied the Spanish Armada, and that the horse boat was wrecked off the Connemara coast and all the beautiful horses swam ashore. The horses from the sea were welcomed—even then Irishmen preferred horses to people—and brought ashore and introduced to the tough, swarthy shore-dweller—Milesian horses who were the beasts of burden at that time. The resulting breed is the horse of the world, they say, for sheer endurance and grit. Few Connemara horses—ponies, they are called, for they are quite small—are ever given shelter and many are never fed anything but what they can forage for themselves. They are left out even in the wildest winter weather, sheltering in caves or crannies, living on the scantiest herbage. They make their way down the ragged hillsides and pull themselves free of quagmire and bog. They have surefootedness and courage seldom equaled by more domesticated

animals. I should think they would have nothing but contempt for people who presume to claim ownership of them. A little horse of such caliber could belong only to himself.

It is there in the West that the tinkers are oftenest seen. If tinkers are not Gypsies, I don't know what they are; and I have been assured that they are not Gypsies. They are a roving, untamed people who camp beside the roads and at the edges of fields. Meeting them is a little like stepping on a live wire. It jolts you and makes you uncomfortable.

While we were driving through the West, we passed close beside a cartload of them piled on top of an assortment of household goods, drawn by a stout horse. There was nothing romantic about them, and I had expected that the tinkers would seem romantic. The man was driving, hunched over and staring between the horse's ears—his doggy face like a boxer pup's, brown and underslung, and blank. The woman resembled a discarded O'Cedar mop; she had a dusty fountain of dun-colored hair that straggled over her face. From within this ragged curtain her eyes gleamed sharp and wary, and her mouth was like a rattrap. The ratlike children, of whom there were several, were agile, skinny and sly. I felt that at any moment they would swarm over me and tweak my cultured pearl earrings from my fainting lobes.

Miss Witlov heard me say "Ugh" as our car passed in nightmare slowness. By the simple expedient of not putting on her glasses, she did not see the tinkers at all.

A Loch and a Rock

It seems to me that you could spend years in Ireland, traveling and inquiring. And the more you traveled and the more you inquired, the more you'd realize what you were missing. Yet the young woman at the Irish Tourist Information Bureau had other ideas.

"You can see the whole country in ten days," she told me. And *that's* true. Ireland is about the size of our own State of Maine, and you could cover the ground in ten days or two weeks.

Beginning in May, and continuing all summer and autumn, excellent tours start out of Dublin in superbuses that glide over the good Irish roads. In nine days and for $87.42 you can see all the highlights of the South. A "circular tour" all around the dear little isle will take twelve days and cost $118.44. You will stay at good hotels, and when the tour is finished you will feel satisfied at the amount of sightseeing you have accomplished. It's worth nine or twelve days of anybody's life. Of course, other bus tours are available too.

A more leisurely way to travel is to hire a private automobile and a driver-guide. In this way you can explore byways that the

bus has to miss. This is an extremely pleasant and comfortable way to travel, and it is not, by American standards, expensive.

If it were not for the unpredictable Irish climate, with its constant showers and its chilliness, Ireland would become an American playground. The poor little country would disappear under clouds of monoxide gas from our big cars; the hot dog and the hamburger would become ubiquitous. Our strident American voices would drown out the soft Irish speech. We'd take over.

I once heard a little song that used to be sung long ago by an old Irish woman to amuse her grandchildren:

Oh, oh the sweet little spot of it!
Oh, oh, the dear little isle!

The sweet little spot of it would be entirely snowed under if the Americans visited Ireland in any such numbers as they visit France or England or even Italy. The distances in Ireland seem to an American, used to vast spaces, to be unbelievably short. For instance, straight across the waist of the whole country, from Dublin to Galway, is less than two hundred miles. Before you get settled in the bus or car, you're where you started out for. It's amusing and relaxing.

Miss Witlov and I traveled by private car with Sean O'Brien to drive and guide us; we started out every morning with only a general idea of where we were going. We believed that by avoiding the well-known places, we might get to see more of the Irish people and taste more of the flavor of the real Ireland. We missed out on some of the most interesting spots because we spent our time scurrying up and down muddy back roads looking for local color, but sometimes we had gentle little adventures that we could not possibly have had if we had not been "getting lost." So whether it's saner to go with the crowd; whether it's a happier experience to blaze your own trail—I really don't know. Either way, and rain or no rain, you're sure to be enriched and delighted.

"The bank gave me seven pounds and some change," I said.

The pretty girl at the desk closed the cash drawer with a snap of finality.

"Ah, well," she said, smiling brightly, "money's not a god in Ireland."

She was not being impertinent or clever. She was merely stating what she considered to be a pleasant fact. I slunk away, chagrined that I had been so coarse. But later, when I got to thinking it over, I decided that I would have been more impressed by her unworldliness if it had not been *my* shillings and pence she was so indifferent to.

Using the Dunraven Arms as a base, Miss Witlov and I expected to drive out to various interesting places in the vicinity. We intended to visit Tipperary and Limerick; we wanted to see the Rock of Cashel and the digging at Knockadoon on Loch Gur. But our first morning at Adare brought the news to Miss Witlov that Constance Collier was dead. Miss Collier, a world-famous actress, had been Miss Witlov's life-long friend. The news of her passing saddened Miss Witlov and drove from her mind any desire for excursions or adventures. She wanted to be alone to think about Constance Collier and the many happy times they had had together, beginning with the days when they had been young actresses, just starting their careers. So I left Miss Witlov gazing unhappily out of her bedroom window at the little thatched cottages across the road from the Dunraven Arms. She was not seeing the cottages or anything else, except visions of the vivid and beautiful woman who had been one of her loved associates.

The sun was shining gently as Sean O'Brien guided the car away from the little inn. Neither he nor I knew where we were going, but we were on our way. We had the general idea that we might go to Knockadoon first and to the Rock of Cashel later, but maybe not. If a car can be said to amble, ours ambled. And by-and-by we came to a fork in the road.

There was no sign to direct us anywhere, so Sean stopped the car and we sat there to look around and decide which turning we would take. A small, rather nondescript cottage stood in the triangle where the roads parted, but behind this house stood a half-ruined hexagonal cottage of stone. It was like something out of a fairy tale, romantic and ancient. I got out of the car and went over to look at it more closely.

Whether it had been built according to the skillful plans of a qualified architect or whether it had been slapped together by an inspired journeyman mason, there was no way of knowing. But it stood there almost like a fine musical composition, all its rhythms pleasing, everything about it happily contrived.

I peeked through the cracks in the boards that had been nailed over the glassless windows. The ceilings were so low it was a wonder that adults could stand erect there. There was a small, irregularly shaped room with a dirt floor and a fireplace and one doorway that opened into the merest slice of a room. And that was all there was to the house, and all that there had ever been. Yet somebody had lived here; it was not a child's playhouse, it was the habitation of an adult and maybe—probably—of an entire family. There was about this house an air of wisdom, and pretty sly wisdom at that. It was full of secrets and not one secret would it divulge to me. I couldn't even get into the house, the door was boarded and barricaded against all intruders and snoopers.

Any American worthy of the name would have drooled over that hexagonal stone cottage. I felt indignant that it was falling into decay and utter ruin, although, being built of good Irish stone, it was taking its time about falling down. I stood back a little and looked it over, but there was no way I could see that I could have it pried off its foundations and shipped to the Catskill Mountains. I yearned to possess that house; I began to understand how William Randolph Hearst had felt when he was trolling around the world and came upon delightful buildings that he fell in love with. He had the stones numbered and the place dis-

mantled and crated and shipped—and then left the whole thing standing in some warehouse for years. But I wouldn't do that. I knew exactly where I'd put the house.

I wondered who had lived there in years gone by.

Where were the people now?

Why had the house been abandoned?

It simply made me sick not to know these things.

I couldn't stand it.

I went to the next-door cottage and banged on the door. Surely whoever lived there would know something about the little old house standing at the edge of their yard.

Sean O'Brien slid down behind the wheel of his car and pulled his cap down over his face, making out he didn't know me. But I didn't care. I really wanted very much to know about the empty house.

A woman with piercing dark eyes—a slender brunette with a worn, beautiful face—answered my knock. No doubt she considered me potty, but she concealed her opinion. She listened to my gushy questions and never took her eyes from my face. A child clung to her skirts as she stood in the doorway; a rough-hewn, sturdy four-year-old who turned his eyes up at me from under his thatch of tow-colored hair and said never a word for half an hour on end.

"Can you tell me anything about that white stone house?" I asked the woman of the cottage. "It's a very unusual-looking place and I'd like to find out something about it, if possible." There was no answering smile on the Irishwoman's face, but she was not unfriendly. She considered my question silently and looked over my shoulder at the other cottage.

She made no direct reply to what I had asked her, but somehow she made me understand that the hexagonal house had once been the lodge house of the large estate nearby. Only after she

had made this explanation did I notice that the entrance gates to an estate were opposite.

"The Bennetts owned the freehold," said the woman at last, "but the ancient people died off and there's new ones, but very nice people."

"Has the lodge house been empty long?" I said.

"It's been just like that for as long as I've known it," was the reply. She was willing enough to tell me what she knew about it, but I could see that she really knew no more. I had to abandon my hopes of finding out the secret of the stone house. But before I left her doorstep, I looked down at the boy who was hanging onto her skirt and asked his name.

"Martin his name is," replied his mother, "the youngest of twelve and four of them dead."

"A big family!" I exclaimed. "You look very young to be the mother of twelve."

"If it wasn't for the teeth," she agreed mildly, and I noticed then that her teeth were not home-grown.

Her initial reticence was melting a little and she almost smiled at me.

"I'm forty-four," she said, "although, as you say, I don't look it. Myself, I am the youngest of twenty-seven. Twenty-seven children were born to my mother."

"Your eight must be plenty to have to provide for," I said when I had a little recovered from this statement.

"We're well off, in a way, with the garden and all," she told me, waving her hand at a garden plot that spread out neatly behind the hexagonal stone lodge. The straight rows of vegetables looked like a Grant Wood painting. The garden was about an acre in size.

"Cabbage and potatoes, beets and turnips and onions, we have," said the woman. "And meat every day on the table."

"What kind of meat?" I asked her.

"Oh, pheasant and duck and the like," she said. "*He* goes shooting and I must say it gets tiresome."

"What gets tiresome?" I asked. "That he goes shooting all the time?"

"No, that we have to eat pheasant and duck all the time," she replied. "It gets tiresome. *He* has a job in Hospital Town" (a village nearby) "but even so, it ain't so easy. All we can do is wait until the children get grown up enough to help out."

"Do you get milk for the children to drink?" I asked.

"Not much," was her answer, "milk costs dear."

Now it was her turn to ask questions.

"Are you an American?" she asked, and when I said that I was she looked at me eagerly.

"I have an auntie in America," she said, "but I have mislaid the address. There's other relations in St. Louis and Chicago and we're hoping that they'll maybe take a few of the children over. Poor people can hardly get along here, even if himself works steady the way mine do."

All at once it seemed as though she wanted to tell me a lot.

"The oldest girl, she's sixteen, she went over to London to be a nun, but she got some kind of throat trouble there and her father had her home again. She got over the trouble all right and she wants to go back to be a nun again. But I don't think he'll let her go."

"Do the children go to school?" I asked.

"They do, some of the time, mostly," said the woman.

It was beginning to rain now, and I climbed into the car to be out of the wet.

"If you'll tell me your name, I'll put you in a book," I said. And so she gave me her name and address and here it is: "Mrs. Daniel O'Riordain, Holy Cross, Kilmalock, County Limerick."

Now the rain was fairly beating down, but Mrs. O'Riordain and the boy Martin did not seem to mind it. Sean started the car and we drove down the road that the woman had pointed out as being the one that would take us to Loch Gur. She was still talking as we left her yard; I could see her jaws moving, though we were too far away to hear what she was saying. Martin stood

with his face burrowed into her skirt and the rain pelted down onto his straw-colored hair.

It was a small cloudburst that we were riding into, but I did not feel nervous as I sometimes do when a car is being driven through a blinding rain. I was much too preoccupied thinking about this woman I'd met by chance. Herself the youngest of a family of twenty-seven, the mother of twelve, she dined upon pheasant or duck every day and had an acre of garden to supply her and her family with other food. She lived next door to an ancient hexagonal fairy-tale house about which she knew very little; across the road lay an ancient freehold. And yet there was a great wistfulness about one of her remarks: "There's nothing to do for a bit of fun," she had said, and I could well believe it.

However, the remark had some comical aspects, and thinking it over I burst out laughing. Sean O'Brien, not taking his eyes from the rivery road ahead, heard my laughter, and without knowing what was amusing me, he obligingly laughed with me.

Loch Gur was down the road a piece from the crossroads place of Holy Cross. At the rate it was raining I had the idea that it would be simpler if we just stopped beside the road and let the lake come to us. The rain fell as though it were dead set on washing away every square inch of solid ground in Ireland. When we came to the entrance to the field where the archeologists were said to be working, there was nothing to be seen but a boggy field behind a gray curtain of pouring water.

"The lake's over the crest at the foot of the hill," Sean O'Brien told me.

"I don't doubt it," I said.

"You'll have to be giving it a miss," said Sean.

"I will," I agreed.

And that's all I ever saw of the Knockadoon workings at Loch Gur.

It was not until I returned to the United States that I found out much about this place. After I had read about the Knockadoon

project I was deeply unhappy about having given it a miss, but what with the weather that day, I couldn't have done otherwise.

When Ian MacCarthy of the Dublin office of the Irish Tourist Bureau worked with me on our itinerary, he looked rather mischievous when he told me about Loch Gur.

"The people doing the excavating don't like strangers poking around," said Ian, "but it's worth taking a chance, I think." After reading about the amount of work involved and the delicacy of the operations in general, I can sympathize with scientists who are impatient with sidewalk superintendents.

The Loch Gur "diggings," called the Knockadoon works, have been stirring the interest of archeologists for a long time. The first serious examinations were begun in the early 1800's and they have been continued intermittently ever since. For a number of years past Professor Sean P. O'Riordain has been in charge. (This neighborhood seems to attract O'Riordains. I don't know whether Professor O'Riordain is related to the Daniel O'Riordains of Holy Cross or not.)

The story is that the first discoveries of the ruins at Loch Gur were made accidentally by local people who were digging for treasure in the area. Legends and rumors persisted through the years that *something-or-other* was at Loch Gur, and naturally, people hoped it was treasure. It was these seekers after gold who found the first indications that an ancient civilization had existed here: stone hearths and circles, stone walls and other mystifying remnants. Then the antiquarians and archeologists came along to investigate and have been investigating ever since.

An archeologist, to qualify as an archeologist at all, must be a detective of no mean skill. From clues so slight that an unqualified observer would never even see them, the trained excavator can deduct many pertinent facts. While the rest of the world plays bridge or golf, criticizes plays, baby-sits, makes out income taxes or cleans out the lion's cage at the zoo, people like Professor O'Riordain examine a piece of pottery bead 30 mm. in diameter and reconstruct from it a way of life.

The discoveries at Knockadoon are thought to be of the Neolithic or the Bronze Age, and probably most of the construction took place about the eighteenth century B.C. Some coins dated 890 to 914 A.D. have been found in the ruins too, proving, I guess, that some Johnny-Come-Lately was prowling around the diggings about that time.

A great stone circle about 150 feet in diameter was found and it is generally agreed that this is the finest stone circle in Ireland. Other smaller circles were gradually uncovered in the same vicinity and it is thought that these circles were ritualistic. Subsequent study shows that the entire area included human habitations, cattle enclosures, cemeteries, tombs, temples, hearths and perhaps even rude forts. It seems to be a complete village—the site chosen because of the water supply and the ease with which it could be defended.

The excavations are on the land of the late Robert Ryan, who generously permitted his grounds to be hacked to pieces in the interest of history. Equally impressive and unselfish public spirit has been shown by everybody connected with the work from the very start. The work has been financed by government funds and by grants from the universities of Cork and Dublin.

The actual labor involved in the excavating has been done by local people hired by Professor O'Riordain. They have become engrossed in the work and have developed a proprietary interest in all "finds." For besides the stone circles, a variety of objects have come to light: a bronze bracelet, stone knives and axes, arrowheads and the like. Human bones have been unearthed, as well as hundreds of bones of oxen and the bones of one small horse. Great was the rejoicing the day that half a pottery bead was found; this aroused intense interest because it proved some point that had been moot until the bead's discovery.

No doubt my mentioning the work at Loch Gur and my superficial description of the findings would set Professor O'Riordain's teeth on edge. A man who has spent so many years engrossed

in a project can hardly be expected to have patience with anybody whose interest is less engrossing than his own. But I make no apology for having brought the Loch Gur work into these pages. After all, people have been snooping around Knockadoon for centuries. And even a passing tourist—that lowly and despised creature—can get a real kick out of a glimpse of a village that was going about its affairs long before the birth of Christ.

I would have been delighted to see the mystical ruins that rainy day, but it was not to be. The rain kept raining and Sean drove the car carefully along the narrow road. At last he stopped, declaring that in his opinion we had better wait until the rain let up a little. We had stopped right in front of one of the most Irish of stone cottages, a long, low, whitewashed house with its thatched roof glowing golden in the rain. It stood a bit back from the road across a narrow yard that was fast becoming a quagmire.

"I'll go in and ask can we wait there until the rain's past," said Sean O'Brien, and he ducked across the yard and entered the cottage after the peck of a courtesy knock at the door. In a moment he was back again to help me to the house.

"She says to come in, so," said Sean, and we scuttled through the rain to the shelter of the doorway.

Just inside the door, in a small entry, stood a sturdy cleanly dressed, "decent-looking" woman. She did not smile, but regarded me with a level glance and a grave courtesy.

"Welcome to Loch Gur," said she, and led the way into the house.

Even the short run from the car had spangled my coat with raindrops and coated my shoes with mud. I was afraid I would track up the clean floor, but our hostess disregarded that probability.

"Be seated, please," she said sedately, and placed rush-seated chairs for Sean O'Brien and me in front of the big fireplace where a peat fire was glimmering.

"You're very kind to let us come in out of the rain," I said,

"and I'm very lucky to be able to see your pleasant little house."

"It's a bit of old Ireland," said the woman, and went about building up the fire.

The room where we were sitting was the full width of the house, a general-purpose room, kitchen and living room cozily combined. Through a small rear window could be seen a fruit tree in full bloom; it was as if the tree were a glowing picture framed there on the wall. The floor was stone and the hearth, which was a continuation of the floor, was of stone, too. A three-legged pot of black iron stood before the fire and in the fireplace was a sturdy iron crane where it could be hung for cooking. There were dish cupboards along the walls and a big table stood comfortably in the center of the stone floor. Several religious pictures hung on the walls and over one doorway was a holy picture with a light burning in a red-glass holder.

After we had rested for a moment, we began to trade names and information. Our hostess was Miss Maura Stundon of Loch Gur, County Limerick, Ireland, and she keeps the house for her uncle John and her cousin Ned Conway.

I told her that I was from the United States and she said that she had relatives in America. (Everybody in Ireland has relatives in America.) But unlike Mrs. Daniel O'Riordain, Miss Stundon knew the address of her overseas relative.

"Ed Madden his name is," she told me "but we call him 'Yankee Ned,' the name Ned being so common in the family." Miss Stundon found the bit of paper upon which the address of "Yankee Ned" was written and it turned out that Mr. Madden lives in Long Island City. His Loch Gür relatives send him and his family their greetings by way of the pages of this book.

"Come, now, let me show you the rest of the house," said Miss Stundon, and led us across the common room to the door under the worshiping light.

"This is the men's bedroom," she said, showing a neat, pleasant room with two beds carefully made up under colorful bedspreads.

There were a couple of chests of drawers and a table or two, everything plain, comfortable, and shiny clean.

"Come see *my* castle, now," said Miss Stundon, and we went through the main room and the entry to another side of the house. Her bedroom, her castle, was large, pleasant and as neat as wax. Holy pictures made the walls colorful and there was a large fireplace back-to-back with the one in the kitchen. Under a gay-colored quilt, her bed was smooth and clean. There was a shiny mahogany round table that looked as though it might be an heirloom. There was a sewing machine and there were signs that we had interrupted some sewing work. The light that came through the small, high window was brown with the gloom of the rain, and Miss Stundon, looking out at the silvery twinkles, sighed contentedly.

"I love to see it showery like this. All the leaves and the grass get washed off and look so fresh and green after it," she said.

I forebore saying that if it kept up at this rate leaves and grass would indeed be washed off. Off and away and the trees along with them. But Miss Stundon was leading us back to the kitchen, and as we sat down, the front door opened and a young man put his head around the entry doorway and called out something to our hostess.

"They've brought Ned Conway," she said, and went out. Looking after her through a kitchen window I saw that, heedless of the rain, she went to a shed close by where a group of three or four young men were standing and another young man sat in a wheel chair. Miss Stundon put a strong arm around this young man's shoulders, and leaning on her he was able to walk to the house.

"My cousin, Ned Conway," she said, and settled him in a chair in the inglenook. Ned was perhaps twenty-five or so, with a very handsome head and face, good twinkling eyes and a kind mouth. Neither he nor his cousin was the slightest bit self-conscious about the American guest. They gave me the impression that this

was a household where visitors were nothing unusual. A casual welcome was extended to all.

"Ned sometimes goes down to talk to the road gang," said Miss Stundon, "and today they've brought him home because of the weather."

"This lady is American," our hostess told her cousin. "She had it in mind to see the digging, but the rain prevented, you see."

"They're not at present digging," Ned Conway told me, "but they will be at it again in two weeks."

"It's very interesting," Miss Stundon said. "They've fixed an old castle that stands at the edge of the lake and it's there that Professor O'Riordain and a few young helpers live while the work is going on."

"We heard it all explained over the wireless, what they are doing down there and all," Ned Conway told us.

There was a fine big radio on a shelf near the front window. It seemed strange to think that this little bit of old Ireland was so closely in touch with all the world as well as with the Knockadoon diggings just down the road. Somehow, sitting in the warm common room of the Conway cottage made the outside world seem very far away.

"We've had the electric only two years," said Miss Stundon, and I noticed that the red light before the holy picture was electric, not a candle as I had thought.

"You'll be having a cup of tea," said Miss Stundon, laying a cloth on the table and putting water to boil in the kettle on the crane. While she was arranging the table I thought of another thing that Ian MacCarthy had told me when he met me in Cork. It wasn't a lesson in good manners he was giving me, but only explaining how things were ordered in Ireland.

"It's awful to refuse a cup of tea," he said solemnly. "That's one thing nobody must do. One cup you *must* take and there's no need for a battle over a second cup. When it comes to a third cup, a person may protest. But the woman of the house will pour the

third cup anyhow, and when we take it, we say, "Oh, aren't you the terrible woman!"

I was thinking that now would be a fine time to show that I had learned a bit about Irish ways. Miss Stundon put out two kinds of jam and fresh butter and provided a round loaf of snowy bread.

"Indeed and I made it," she said, answering my question. "Right there in that same iron pot." She pointed to the pot where the water for the tea was boiling. "The dough's put in there, and the cover's put on and it's all covered with warm ashes till it's done." I, biting into the soft, flavorful slice, thought glumly that we at home with our electric ranges and our thermostats and our automatic timers could produce no such product as this. This bread, cooked almost by instinct, was a lump of pure heaven. It was my intention to get Maura Stundon's recipe for her soda bread, but what with one thing and another I forgot to. One thing that took my attention was a row of iron hooks in the ceiling over the fireplace. "Hooks for the lad," I was told. They smiled at my bewilderment and explained that "the lad" means "rashers of bacon and ham, and it's on the hooks they're put to keep sweet."

Now the four of us became expansive and very friendly. Sean O'Brien, Ned Conway, Maura Stundon and I fell to drinking tea and eating jam and bread and butter and it was all very cozy and relaxed.

The talk turned again to the archeologists and the work at Loch Gur. The question arose as to why anything of the kind should be undertaken at all. Miss Stundon was of the opinion that it was just as well to let the past alone. What's to be gained, she asked, by digging things up and finding out what they used to look like and what they were used for? She said Professor O'Riordain had found pieces of pottery and dozens of bones and that he could tell which were human and which were animal. She herself had seen something said to be part of a human skeleton from the diggings brought into her very kitchen here and laid on this

very table. It had been recovered almost intact and was about so long—Miss Stundon measured the length with her hands—more than a yard, it would seem. The skeleton had been wrapped completely in linen or some cloth to preserve it, and when she saw the bundle and was told what it contained, Miss Stundon said that she told them firmly that they should kindly keep it wrapped. It was being sent off to Dublin to a museum there. Now what was the use of it all, Miss Stundon wanted to know.

Ned Conway said that in his opinion studying the past would help us to find out how much we have progressed, if any. This seemed like a wise thought to have expressed and we all nodded gravely. Sean O'Brien said that the way he looked at it, archeology was a hobby and a hobby was a good thing for anybody. I, sitting full of warm soda bread and jam and Irish tea and contentment, searched my soul and could find nothing to contribute on any subject whatever.

Without meaning to be rude I had eaten practically all of the bread. I had also made awful inroads on the jam and the butter. And now my hostess was about to pour my third cup of tea. I came to myself with a start and said sharply that I had already had two cups of tea and that more was not to be thought of. I made a feeble motion of taking my cup away. Miss Stundon made a clucking noise and poured the third amber cupful for me.

"Aren't you the terrible woman!" I said indignantly.

Nobody paid the slightest attention to my remark.

I had become Irish.

Because I had showed some interest in antique china, Miss Stundon amiably opened her china cupboards and showed me the various treasured pieces in them. There were several dishes of the "Austrian Pheasant" pattern and several pale-blue-and-white Longport platters that a dealer at home would be happy to possess —the complicated and rococo patterns of ladies and gentlemen in satins and plumes, and flowers and vases and the like.

"I don't know how old they are, I'm sure," said Miss Stundon

rather fondly. Ned Conway added that all he knew was that those dishes had been around for a long time.

The rain had come to a reluctant stop, but there was a thick mist. Miss Stundon looked through the small rear window to where the blossoming fruit tree stood dimly pink and white.

"Ah, I love it when it's misty like this," she said. "The mist is so pretty and all."

"Does it ever snow here?" I asked, and they told me it snowed very rarely.

"But there's snow on the mountains sometimes," said Ned Conway, "you can see it from here in the right weather. What's the name of the mountains?" he asked his cousin, and after giving it a moment's thought she said that the mountains were the Galty Mountains.

"I heard them mentioned on the wireless last winter," she said. " 'There's snow on the Galty Mountains,' is what the man said." Miss Stundon turned to me. "It's a real comfort, the wireless," she told me, "although even without it the time passes very pleasantly. It's never dull, it seems, or only occasionally so."

She rose to put more peat on the fire. "You have no family here in Ireland at all?"

"No," I said, "I have none."

"Ah, well," she said gently, comforting me, "now you have us."

It seemed very fitting that at such a sunny instant the sun should shine out. And, as usual in Ireland, the minute the sun shone everything seemed to become clean and dry, as though all the long dreary storm had been forgiven and forgotten. There was still mud, of course, but there was hardly any feeling of dampness in the air. I remembered what an Irishwoman had told me about Ireland before I left the United States. "But it's a kind of *dry* rain," she had said.

Before Sean and I left, Miss Stundon took me on a tour of the little estate. There were two sheds and a garden—and this, despite the dry rain, still looked drowned. There were hens and a cow

stall, though whether there was a cow I have forgotten. There was the glorious flowering fruit tree and a giant bush of boxwood. All this, nestled close to the whitewashed cottage with the yellow thatched roof, made up the Irish home.

Thatching is pronounced "tatching" in Ireland, and Miss Stundon, looking up at the roof, said sadly that the tatcher's trade was dying out.

"We've needed repairs done for a year or more," she told me, "and the tatcher keeps promising to come, but he never does."

My inexperienced eyes could detect nothing wrong with the roofing, but my experienced ears caught a very familiar note in her complaint.

"You can't get a living soul to do anything for you these days," I told Miss Stundon. "In our little home in the Catskill Mountains it's just the same. If the man of the house can't make the needed repairs, everything falls to rack and ruin."

"It's the truth," she sighed. And we sighed together.

I went back into the house to say good-by to Ned Conway, sitting helpless but happy in the chair where Miss Stundon had settled him, conversing cheerfully with Sean O'Brien. Miss Stundon came to the door to wave as we drove away.

"Come back again before you leave Ireland," she said gently. She said it not effusively, but gravely. She said it as though she meant it.

Well, you would have thought that Sean O'Brien had engineered the whole thing from the very beginning. From the smile on his face and the perky angle to his cap it was easy to tell how proud he was about our visit to that bit of old Ireland. And he had every right to be, although it was all pure accident. We had been accepted without suspicion and given warm-hearted hospitality without stint. My chief regret was that Miss Witlov had not been with us. My second regret was that we had not met the owner of the house, Miss Stundon's uncle.

Maybe next time we can correct both of these shortcomings.

As I looked back at our visit, I began to think that I had been outrageous. I had about eaten them out of house and home and I had poked my nose into every corner of house and barn. I tried to soothe myself by saying that I hadn't gone anywhere or done anything that my hostess had not herself suggested. But the more I thought about it, the more embarrassed I got. I decided that I must do something to show my gratitude for all the kindness that had been shown me. I determined to send a fine present.

When I got to Dublin I bought a nice, big fruitcake for the Loch Gur people. While I was wrapping it up, I tasted just the merest crumb off one corner, to be sure that it was good enough to send to them. It was. And before I could control myself I had burrowed a hole as big as a teacup into the luscious thing. I couldn't send it in that condition, so I ate the rest of it. I intended to get another, but I never got around to it. So if Miss Stundon and Ned Conway ever read these words I hope they will realize that I tried to be grateful. I hope they will forgive me; and I promise to send them a fruitcake one of these days.

After that day, whenever I saw a stone cottage, whitewashed and neat, prim and secure, I thought of my day at Loch Gur. I am not starry-eyed enough to believe that all the bad housing conditions in Ireland have disappeared. History books and travel books are full of descriptions of the misery and poverty among the Irish cotters. The "pig in the parlor" must have some basis in fact. All the sluttish old women and all the drunken, shiftless old men are not now sitting around their sanitary hearths, scrubbed and reformed. I've seen plenty of houses along the roads that looked as though the interiors might be pretty soggy. But none of that matters. For me, because of Miss Stundon's beeswax housekeeping all Irish cottages are doll houses and all the inhabitants are serene, decent people who extend a plain, sincere welcome to a stranger.

Let me say, in passing, that many of the rattle-te-bang cottages I mentioned that looked in sore need of repairs and general spruc-

ing up had about them a rakish, winking dilapidation. Although the walls were shaky and the whitewash was peeling off, although sometimes the windows were stuffed with rags and the doors hung crooked on loose hinges, very often, on the mangy thatching of the roof, there would grow patches of perky, defiant dandelions. These hardy flowers, erect among their ragged leaves, seemed to be thumbing their noses at the scandalized passer-by. Flowers seldom grow on the house roofs of thrifty, conservative people. What do you make of it all?

While I was meditating along these lines, our car came almost to a standstill. A flock of sheep was being driven along the road ahead of us and both the sheep and their drover were taking their good time about it. It made little difference to us. We were in no hurry. But all at once, for a reason not clear to me, the shepherd decided to speed matters up. He fetched one fat, motherly animal a smart blow with a light stick he carried, and Sean O'Brien, mildest of men, got furious about it.

"What do you want to go hitting it for?" he roared at the startled shepherd.

"Sure, it didn't hurt it at all, God bless you," said the man. And it certainly could not have hurt the sheep, since the blow had bounced off the thick wool. But it made Sean O'Brien mad, just the same.

Sheep, with their dry, pointy noses and their sly, pale eyes, remind me of a music teacher I had when I was about ten years old. He had a woolly little beard and he used to pounce upon my hands with his little paws and say, "Mmmmm-a goodness, *no*!" That day when we were held up by the flock of sheep, I thought of the unpleasant man whose name I have long ago forgotten. To me, all sheep look like music masters.

Here and there along the road, sheep who certainly seemed old enough to be past "child"-bearing, lay with lambs beside them, self-satisfied and smug. One mammoth old creature lay on top of a pile of peat, the white of its wool contrasting with the chocolate

color of the drying fuel. It gave a Through-the-Looking-Glass atmosphere to the landscape and I wouldn't have been in the least surprised if it had clambered down and come over to our car to demand the fare, like the sheep in the Lewis Carroll story.

We finally got past all the sheep and Sean's good humor was restored by the sight of a large pig that was hogging the middle of the road. It was a very big pig and its rump was a blushing rose color. It swung along with a stately waddle that had the merest touch of wickedness. I told Sean a pig story I had read in an Irish paper only the night before. It seems that an Irishman went to buy a pig and was offered a good pig at a fair price. He refused to buy, however, because the pig had a scut tail (the dictionary says a scut tail is a short, erect one). The farmer was annoyed and asked what difference a scut tail could make. The buyer said it made all the difference in the world to him. He was a poor man and could only afford one pig. And his neighbors would be looking over the fence at his pig and he wanted a pig that would look its best.

The pig who was ambling before us swerved to the side of the road, just then, and began sniffing at some primroses that were growing under a hedge. What a photograph that would have made! But there was nobody handy with a camera, so I just have to remember the picture of the pig and the primroses.

The next thing I should have done was to go to see the famous Rock of Cashel. We were not far from it and the Rock is a "must" on any sightseeing tour. It was the seat of the Munster Kings from 370 A.D. to 1101, and all kinds of marvelous shenanigans have taken place on and around it. The guidebook says: "The buildings on the Rock include a tenth-century Round Tower, Cormac's Chapel, the Cathedral, the Hall of the Vicar's Choral and St. Patrick's Cross, as well as some modern tombs and some enclosing walls."

It sounded fascinating, but I closed the book. I had had quite

a day, what with hexagonal stone lodges, Mrs. Daniel O'Riordain, Miss Stundon and Ned Conway, flocks of sheep, pigs, and now, if I was not mistaken, another rainstorm coming to cap it all.

"I'm tired," I told Sean. "I think I'll just go back to the Dunraven Arms."

"Very good, so," said Sean, turning the car.

"We'll go to the Rock of Cashel another day," I said.

But of course we never did.

A Poem and a Song

I

The word "limerick" used to mean one thing to me and one thing only: a bit of doggerel, a nonsense verse of five lines with the rhyme scheme of a-a-b-b-a. When I got to Adare and was near enough to visit the city of Limerick, I looked forward to hearing the best limericks in the world. I took it for granted, you see, that the limerick had its origin in Limerick, had taken its name from the source, and would be practiced night and day in the streets and homes of the city.

I was wrong on all counts. As to the origin, nobody knows with certainty where the limerick started and nobody knows for sure why it is called "limerick." I never heard a limerick the whole time I was in Limerick, and although I asked several people about it, nobody seemed to know what I was talking about. I didn't inquire at the library or the city hall, which I probably should have done. I just asked waitresses and hotel clerks, a hair-dresser and a man at the post-office stamp window.

No soap.

Nobody had a favorite limerick. In fact, the favorite poet definitely is James Metcalf, whose work appears in the *Irish Indepen-*

dent (and in the *New York Journal-American* and many other American newspapers).

Since the Limerick people couldn't satisfy my curiosity about limericks, I waited until I got back home to the United States and did a little research about them. I didn't find out much, after all. One of the authorities I consulted—oh, all right, the Encyclopaedia Britannica—says that the origin of the limerick is lost in obscurity and that even researchers for the Encyclopaedia Britannica haven't been able to pierce the gloom. Much.

One theory they advance is that once upon a time, at convivial parties, a game used to be played that required each member present to compose, extemporaneously, a verse in the five-line a-a-b-b-a form. After the verse had been composed and declaimed, the rest of the group would call out "Will you come up to Limerick?"

There doesn't seem to be much sense to this, but then, there's not much sense to musical chairs, either. And the Encyclopaedia advances this theory only tentatively, admitting rather shamefacedly that it can't prove what it's saying, inasmuch as no specimens of these extemporaneous verses have ever been found.

A limerick, says the usually staid Encyclopaedia Britannica, is a kind of ribald epigram passed on by word of mouth and more often whispered than sung. I'm really surprised at the Encyclopaedia, because many of the funniest limericks are not ribald at all—although, of course, one man's limerick is often another man's poison.

There was an old man in Nantucket,
Who kept all his cash in a bucket,
His daughter, named Nan,
Ran away with a man,
And as for the bucket, Nan tuck it.

and

To a hen, said Henry Ward Beecher,
You are really a beautiful creature,

The hen, just for that,
Laid an egg in his hat,
And thus did the hen reward Beecher.

Maybe the one about the plumber named Lee is more the kind that the Encyclopaedia people are used to.

There is more information on the limerick in these same pages. They say it's possible that the veterans of the Irish Brigade brought this poetic form back from France. The Irish Brigade was organized in Limerick and was attached to the French army for nearly a hundred years, beginning in 1691. I should think veterans a hundred years old would be past being interested in verse forms, however ribald, but I'm told that it was not the *original* Brigadiers, but their descendants, who finally came home to Limerick when the Brigade was disbanded. And the descendants brought with them "barrack-room ballads" from France in the limerick form. The Encyclopaedia gives this example:

Digerie, Digerie, Doge,
La souris ascend l'horloge;
L'horloge frappe,
La souris s'échappe,
Digerie, Digerie, Doge.

That's a "barrack-room ballad"? Sounds like a nursery rhyme to me. But I can't deny that it is a limerick.

A poet named Edward Lear wrote a *Book of Nonsense* in 1846 and in it he used the limerick and gave it a tremendous push toward popularity. Lear's form was slightly different from the classic one, in that part of the first line was repeated in the last, giving less sparkle and a lot less amusement, to my way of thinking.

There was a young girl of Majorca
Whose aunt was a very fast walker;
She walked sixty miles

And leaped fifteen stiles,
Which astonished that girl of Majorca.

(He couldn't get it published today, I'll bet a cookie.)

Another form of limerick uses fantastic rhymes.

The lifeboat that's kept at Torquay
Is intended to float in the suay:
The crew and the coxswain
Are sturdy as oxwain,
And as smart and as brave as can buay.

I decided to try my hand at this last form, and starting with the fact that the Irish name Sean is pronounced Shawn, I wrote:

There once was a fellow named Sean,
Who said, "Just as sure as you're bean,
I'll kick up my heels,
Just to see how it feels,
Quite early next Saturday mean."

Oh, well. It's *my* book.

The Encyclopaedia finishes off its information about limericks this way: "The best verses contain the largest amount of improbable incident or of subtle innuendo that can be crowded into the available space, and they may be regarded as the fixed English form for light, indelicate, epigrammatic satire, as opposed to the ordinary rhyming quatrains which are used on more dignified occasions."

So now you know.

And all this seems to have little or nothing to do with the city of Limerick. It is a pleasant, small town, with plenty of pale Irish sky showing above the low buildings. As a New Yorker, I am

used to narrow strips of sky stretched high above tall buildings. And there is no sky more brilliant or more blue than the sky of our city. On the days when the sun shines in New York—and that is very often, although New Yorkers do not readily admit it—there is a grand, twanging blue to this sky that cannot be matched anywhere.

The Irish sky has a charm of its own. It's a pearly sky much of the time, and at others it is a sweet, dim blue filled with immense billows of white clouds, sailing and sailing. Miss Witlov said, "When you're in Ireland, you're not *under* the sky, you're *in* it, a part of it. It's like being in a pearl-colored globe."

Truly, the Irish sky seems to encompass everything. The whole world and everything in it is part of the Irish heaven. It gives to Ireland a dreamy sort of unreality, under certain light. This is true in Limerick, as well as elsewhere. Yet somehow there is no air of antiquity about this city. There *should* be, because it is the oldest chartered city in Ireland—a charter was granted to Limerick in 1197, well before either Dublin or Cork and ten years before London—but, although it is very old, it has about it merely a sedate and sensible middle-aged air. The main streets are very wide and clean and are lined with pleasant Georgian houses with ironwork balconies across their fronts. There are alleys and back ways, very narrow and quaint, and there are rows of one-story houses, like toy houses to American eyes, but full of large, healthy Irish people. In the fields outside the town is an abandoned castle or two, the usual reminder of an age that is past.

I wonder whether children who live near these ruins play in them and race and roar through the gloomy corridors and clamber perilously up the broken, winding, narrow stone stairs? Do the eeriness and the mystery of these stone castles make their mark upon these children so that they carry always some awareness of other days? Do the children ever pause to dream about the people who built the castle with its towers and its broken battlements and its thick walls and its slit-like windows? Sometimes, instead of

noisy play, do they indulge in quiet dreams in some cobwebby corner? Is the old building merely a convenient playground? Does either one, child or castle, have any influence on the other?

Back in America I pored over many books of ancient and forgotten lore (as Poe said) about Ireland. And I was always amused and entertained to find the pages interlined with penciled—or penned—comments in Gaelic and in English and in Latin. What I could read were usually bitter and occasionally derisive. *Usually* derisive. The reading scholars are contemptuous of the writing scholars and when not contemptuous feel that they have fuller and more superior information and add copiously in handwriting to the information already printed. For some reason, the history of Limerick seems to light plenty of fireworks, and in one margin was written, in brittle and angular script, "This is not the place to enter into disputation with this author," giving the impression that if the right place could be found, a very fine broth of a disputation could be stirred up.

The main streets of Limerick are so wide and pleasant, and the people of Limerick go about their affairs so serenely, without haste, so amiably, that the chief impression one gets of Limerick is of peace. Deep, undisturbed peace. Limerick seems so remote from the outside world with all its worries and woes that it is hard to think of it as a place where discord and strife could ever come. But this impression is false. For Limerick, "The City of the Broken Treaty," was once caught in a mad riot of battle, and was the scene of a heartbreaking wave of emigration. Thousands of Irishmen left their homes and loved ones forever after the placid streets had been filled with dust and blood and dying people. It is for the Battle of Limerick and the Broken Treaty of Limerick and the emigration of the pride and hope of the country, its best men, that Limerick is famous; not for five-line verses.

This is how it happened. The English King, of the reigning team of William and Mary, was a Protestant. He had come to England from Holland at the request of a delegation of English earls and

bishops who wanted the Catholicism of James II removed from England along with James II. (William was married to James's daughter, Mary, but had no use for his father-in-law.) William of Orange, from Holland, was able to snatch the crown from James II without much trouble and in 1689 became William III of England. But James, being a descendant of Irish kings and a Catholic, had all Ireland supporting his cause. It was the dearest wish of the Irish to return James II to the throne of England; for with his return, they calmly believed, would come the repeal of all the anti-Catholic laws and regulations put into effect by Cromwell —rules and regulations which had caused untold misery and degradation to Irish Catholics.

Irish loyalty to James and the unceasing Irish agitation for the return of James to the throne were well known to William of Orange. He determined to put this down, once and for all. At the head of an army he invaded Ireland in August, 1691, and marched on the city of Limerick with the intention of laying it low.

Looking back at this battle from the lofty pinnacle of the atomic age, it seems like a fight waged by tin soldiers moved by hotheaded children. The famous Battle of Limerick lasted three hours and a description of the plan of battle and the ammunition used seems pretty puny compared with the magnificent scale upon which present-day slaughter is conducted. Yet it was a furious battle and a bloody one, and Limerick streets were filled with dust and terror and with dead and maimed people. The blow-by-blow account of the battle reads like one of Hollywood's wildest improbables.

As the English force of ten thousand men advanced upon Limerick, they were observed from the hills by an outlaw and leader of outlaws called Galloping O'Hara. Like an Irish Paul Revere, he leaped upon his famous horse and rode through the hills, calling up his own men and heading for the headquarters of the Irish army to warn them of William's approach. He raced his horse through the midnight, over ferny fields and rushing rivers, the

horse climbing the steep riverbanks like a wolfhound. At last, at dawn, he found the Irish leader, Sarsfield, and when the English came up, the Irish were ready.

The English poured a rain of red-hot shells into Limerick city, but the Irish stood and fought. They faltered once, and then the citizens of Limerick, seizing anything that could pass for weapons, poured out into the dusty turmoil of the streets and rushed to the barricades to help in the defense of their city. Women and girls, filled with fury against the invaders, flew at them and at least startled them long enough for the defenders of Limerick to catch their breath and re-form their lines. Never underestimate the power of a woman.

In addition to the women and girls, any male citizen who was not already in the army or in the outlaw bands joined in the free-for-all. A story is told of a blacksmith who grabbed his sledge hammer and waded into the fight, calling out that he would see what his hammer could do for freedom. Two young apprentices of the smith's took up some kind of weapon and followed their leader. A small breach had been made in the defenses, and through this breach the English would be sure to come. The smith rushed to this place and took his station there, and when the first Englishman, a captain, started to climb through, the smith smote with his hammer and drove the Englishman's helmet down through his collarbone, putting him permanently out of the battle. Next through was a colonel—bad protocol; the smith should have taken the colonel first, but he was in no mood to quibble. The colonel was vigorously hammered and rendered absolutely obsolete.

The apprentices did very well, too, but then came some kind of explosion—gunfire or shellfire—and both the young Irishmen were killed. There is an Irish belief that no ill or harm ever comes to a blacksmith, and in this instance the old belief held true. The smith came through unharmed, bloody but exultant. When the battle was over and the English were defeated, the smith took his bloody hammer over to one of the English officers and presented it to him.

"Take this to your King William," he said, "and tell him that if I could have found him I'd have split *his* skull, too."

Although the English withdrew after three hours' fighting, there were other small battles and skirmishes for a couple of weeks. But then the siege was lifted and William went home, delegating to subordinates the authority to make the terms of peace. On October 3, 1691, the Treaty of Limerick was signed, with the Irish leader, Sarsfield, sitting on a large stone beside the river and using part of the stone for a desk.

The English promised what my beloved but profane father would have called, "hell and all." After the Irish had taken an oath of allegiance to William and Mary, they were to be granted all kinds of concessions long denied them—restoration of their houses and lands, taken away long ago; the right to be Catholics; the right to bear arms—all kinds of things forbidden and denied under Cromwell's laws.

The Irish signed and the English signed; and within two months of the signing, the English had broken every one of the promises. It is the Irish contention that the English never expected to keep the treaty. On the other hand, how many Irishmen expected to keep the oath of allegiance to William and Mary?

Under the Treaty of Limerick, the men of the Irish army had been given three choices: they could join the English army; they could join the French army of Louis XIV, with whom William of Orange had an alliance; or they could leave military service altogether and go home. No more Irish army.

Well, almost any Irishman given a choice between going home and going anywhere else doesn't think long. Home is where you go when there's no more fighting to be done. Only two thousand Irishmen did choose to go home, and only one thousand went into the English army. Eleven thousand chose to go to France. They had never been to France, probably, and a French war was better than no war at all.

There was more to it than that, of course. These eleven thousand who made up the original Irish Brigade considered themselves

under allegiance to James II, who was then in France. The Irishmen hoped somehow to get to James, and to return to Ireland with him in command. Yet after the eleven thousand had boarded the ships for France and had sailed away toward that far place, Ireland was left desolate indeed. For the eleven thousand were the best of Ireland's fighting forces, and nearly the entire aristocracy. All the hope and pride of the nation, Ireland's young manhood, went over the sea to France.

This is the story of the Broken Treaty and the emigration that followed it. And the Treaty Stone, the stone upon which Sarsfield sat to sign the treaty, is now on a pedestal of granite, situated on the right bank of the Shannon at the foot of Thomond Bridge. It used to be a bitter reminder of blasted Irish hopes and unfulfilled Irish dreams. But today, now that the long war for Irish freedom is won, the stone is only a reminder of an old and outgrown past.

In Ireland, even a stone can have a poem written in its honor. Some anonymous minstrel wrote this one about the Treaty Stone of Limerick:

THE TREATY STONE OF LIMERICK

The Treaty Stone of Limerick, the monument unbuilt,
Of Irish might and Irish right and Saxon shame and guilt,
That saw the Prince of Orange, the seige obliged to raise,
And leave his wounded Brandenburghs, to perish in the blaze.

When the storied maids and matrons rushed fearless on the foe,
At the breach where fell their kinsmen by the side of Boisseleau,
That saw the veteran conqueror of Aughrim and Athlone
Forced to comply with D'usson's terms, the aged Treaty Stone.

Small wonder they can't be bothered with limericks.

There is a race track in Limerick, and when we were there a race meeting was being held. Whether the Limerick track is an

important one as Irish tracks go I don't know. It seemed a kind of neighborhood track to me, but one morning when Sean O'Brien and I were driving through Limerick, we saw a sign announcing a race at that very hour. So we went to the races.

All through the streets little girls with their hair braided and tied tight against their heads with colored windmill bows, and small boys with knit caps and runny noses were being hauled along by their mothers or other female relatives, in the direction of the track. There was an air of repressed excitement everywhere. I knew that without doubt dirty dishes by the hundreds had been left in sinks and that stores and commercial houses had been drained of their attendants, for everybody was off to the races, at just under a gallop.

There was a good crowd at the track when we got there. It was very unlike a race-track crowd in America. This was like a church picnic; everybody was there. It was innocent and animated, with an undercurrent of wonder and hope. And all so quiet, compared to our raucous mobs!

There were lots of women—some looking like our own bingo addicts, others who might have been schoolteachers, waitresses, clerks or secretaries. There were many mothers with children in tow, and plenty of what is known as "Occupation: Housewife." A number of ruddy-faced priests stared severely at their racing cards. The other men seemed to come from every walk of life. There were dozens of teen-agers, strolling in groups strictly segregated as to sex, looking for excitement, hoping for adventure, in the typical Irish teen-age way: quietly, attracting no attention to themselves by loud talk or boisterous conduct.

The crowd was not well dressed, but it was not noticeably shabby. Clothing was suited to the climate: woolly, and what we call "weather resistant." In Ireland clothes tend to become all-of-a-color, drab and faded-looking. And this is because no matter how gay the garment may be to begin with, the Irish rain soon leaches out its buoyance and brilliance.

One aspect of the race meeting was, to an American, most astonishing. Nobody was eating anything! No vendors walked all over you and shouted "All hot, get 'em while they're hot!" thrusting lukewarm frankfurters and stale rolls into your hand. No Coca-Cola was being vended. No shouting boys in white caps and aprons stepped on your feet and shook bags of peanuts at you, demanding that you buy. It would be an exaggeration to say that in all that holiday gathering you could have heard a pin drop. But you certainly could have heard a rolling-pin drop. It would have made a crash like thunder.

The most excitement manifested itself down at the paddock where the horses and the jockeys were parading. Even here it was silent excitement. It showed as a kind of tenseness, as though the earth around the paddock were electrified and a small but potent current were emanating from it up through the soles of everybody's feet. The only person who gave no indication of excitement was a tweedy lady with a babushka over her hair. She stared with cool indifference at horse and man alike. I was told that she was Lady Harcott Wood and I could well believe it.

At the paddock I picked out a very pleasant-looking horse, which walked with grave grace and had its tail nattily cut square. I don't mean to say that the tail was cropped; all the horses' tails were long and well shampooed and gleaming. But they were cropped square at the ends, which gave a very neat and stylish air. My horse was Frances Pet, Number 13, and for jockey it had "Mr. MacCarthy in light blue, red hoop, coll and cuffs red cap, blue spots," according to the race list. I put four shillings on Frances Pet and Mr. MacCarthy, win or show. They neither won nor showed, but came in next to last in a race with sixteen entries.

Near the paddock were a lot of strange-looking men wearing funny hats. In front of the little platforms on which they were standing were placards that read, "Dandy Jim, the Old Reliable," and "Jack's Back, you remember Jack," and things like that. These men took bets, but I don't know how. Sean said one of them was

his brother-in-law, and I suppose that since blood is thicker than water it was to the brother-in-law that my four shillings went. All I know is that I never saw hide nor hair of the money again. You'd think some allowance would be made for beginners.

"We'd best go back to the stand," Sean said, "they'll be coming up for the off." I had no wish to miss an up for an off, so back we went.

There were two grandstands and neither had any seats. You stand on tiers that go up in easy stages from a little above ground level. If you're not a midget you can see the whole track nicely. An American crowd would have roared "They're off!" when the horses started. The Irish crowd merely sighed with pleasure and a ripple went through them as a breeze goes over a placid pool.

The race was very unfair and most peculiar. For the first time in my life I had some sympathy for the horses. Instead of letting the poor creatures run, the Irish complicate matters by putting little fences across the tracks every few yards. Just when a horse gets going good he has to stop and jump over a fence. I should think it would make the horses neurotic.

When the finish approached the people groaned quietly and wrung their hands quietly and a man near me muttered desperately, "He's beaten 'im, he's beaten—so." The favorite was beaten, but all anybody said about it seemed to be "No comment."

The men in the funny hats now made a kind of very soft roaring which seemed to be calling attention to the next race. I could plainly see that there was no profit in horse racing for me, since everybody was taking advantage of me, snatching my four shillings and the like of that. I indicated rather haughtily that I had had enough and Sean and I went through the "Pass Out Gate" toward the car. "Pass Out Gate"! Can you imagine the number of wise-cracks that would be made about such a name at home?

Limerick, like many other cities in Ireland, is rich in ruins, rich in tradition and offers rich fare for visitors and tourists. But in

Limerick, as everywhere else, an uninformed visitor cannot expect to browse around and get much excitement or enrichment from antiquities he doesn't know anything about. To put it bluntly, when you've seen one ruin, you've seen them all, unless you've made an effort to find out something about them beforehand.

Irish ruins, including Limerick ruins, tend to be of a sameness. There is usually a ruined abbey, roofless, with its sturdy stone walls beginning to crumble and decay, gaping doorways, vines beginning to wriggle into crevices and crannies. What can a tourist say, after being shown five or six of these places, unless he just says "Yuh"? A deadly boredom may settle over the brightest and most eager of sightseers; the eyes will glaze, the feet will throb, the calves of the legs will knot and sneaky looks will be taken at wrist watches to find out how soon to lunch. There will be a thick sense of guilt and a sad feeling of unworthiness, but there is no dodging the fact that continued ruins are hard to take.

Only the traveler who has done his homework should be expected to appreciate remnants of an honorable past (or *dishonorable*, as far as that goes). Time must be spent reading old records and reports of antiquarians. Line drawings of old doorways and ground plans must be carefully examined and the scholars' explanations must be looked over. Then only will reality and meaning show among the old stones and the decaying towers. Some guidebooks are excellent but no guidebook is a substitute for research.

I think it is just as well to admit all this and when you go to Ireland either prepare yourself a little beforehand or only visit places of outstanding interest. Just strolling through a village street can be far more rewarding than killing yourself heeling and toeing through your fourteenth abbey. Sitting for an hour or so in a café, drinking porter or a cup of tea, can bring you as close to Ireland as staring blindly at the cracks between the stones of your eighth round tower. Taking a quick trip through Ireland will give you only a snapshot of the country. A snapshot is not an x-ray, but it can nevertheless be very revealing in its way.

Any conclusions drawn about Ireland, its past, its present, its future, are impertinent if you are merely strolling temporarily on its shores. This I cheerfully admit. Ireland had a culture so very old, a history so elaborate, so intricate, and so vivid in the minds of most of her citizens, that a tourist or a short-term visitor cannot even dimly understand it. I know of no people so proud, so touchy, so prone to disputation, so easily offended as the Irish. I know of no other people so little interested in the outside world, so self-centered, so egotistical, so hard to understand. I had been told, "The Irish are anti-American; you'll find a lot of anti-American feeling there." I think that the Irish are not anti-American, they are just pro-Irish. They are on fire with love of Ireland, even as Americans are on fire with love of America. But there is this amusing difference between the Irish and the Americans: With all their fiery love of country, the Irish emigrate from it in steady waves, and have been emigrating for many years. Americans emigrate nowhere. When we boast about the glories of home we know what we're talking about because we stay at home in the glory. We may be the travelingest people in the world, but when the vacation is over and the travel money has been spent, it's home we go and glad to get there. The Irish mourn their past and dwell continually upon it. Ena Dargan, writing in an Irish magazine, says: "As a race we suffer from a past that weighs so heavily upon us that it weakens our sense of the present and blurs our vision of the future." The Americans are hard put to remember what happened yesterday. We live today but we look always to the future.

Small wonder, though, that the Irish live much in their past. Their culture and their learning go back a long way; you hear tales of learned monks and long-dead scholars every day, as though these monks and scholars were still among the people. And not all the stories are solemn, either. Many a tale is based on comedy, like the story of the Abbey of Mungret which stood near Limerick in the long ago.

The monks of Mungret were famous for their learning. Mungret was a big community consisting of six churches with fifteen hundred monks. Five hundred of these were preachers, five hundred were psalmists, and five hundred were constantly employed in religious exercises. I don't know when they got time to do their studying, but they must have taken plenty, because their reputation was widespread and solid. The professors at nearby Cashel got tired of hearing how wonderful the Mungret monks were and they decided to journey to the Abbey and quiz the monks and decide for themselves whether this great reputation was deserved.

The monks at Mungret were a very busy lot and they did not want to be bothered with a deputation of visitors from Cashel. They wanted to be let alone; but they could not decide on a way to avoid extending hospitality to the Cashel professors. But they found a way, and what they did was this: Some of the younger monks dressed as washerwomen. (My question at this point was: "Where did a lot of monks get washerwomen's clothes?") Anyhow, the story tells that these young monks dressed as washerwomen set themselves to washing clothes beside a stream. It was near this stream that the Cashel professors had to pass to get to the Abbey of Mungret. When they appeared, the psuedo-washerwomen were sloshing away. One of the Cashel party stopped to inquire of the supposed laundresses whether the way was right for Mungret. To their astonishment the laundresses answered them in various languages spoken with accuracy and refinement. The learned doctors of Cashel withdrew for conference. They concluded that if even the laundresses of Mungret knew so much the monks of the Abbey would know a great deal more. It might even be that the monks would know so much more than the Cashel people that the Cashel professors would be exposed as comparative numskulls. So the doctors and professors of Cashel went back home and the wily monks of Mungret were left in peace.

It was in the ancient monasteries and convents that the records

and manuscripts of Ireland were made and preserved. (The wonderful old Book of Kells was made in a monastery and the library at Limerick has a reproduction of it.) Even today some of the old handcrafts of Ireland are being practiced and perfected in the monasteries and convents. Limerick lace, famous for its delicacy and beauty, was made by nuns in olden times and today in convents near Limerick this lovely art flourishes richly.

As a vivid contrast to the ancient abbeys and the old castles and as definite proof that all Ireland does not live in the past, there is a grand new hospital near Limerick, as modern and forward-looking as anything in the United States. It is a brand-new hospital, not yet in use when I visited there. It is a great three-story building of limestone and Connemara marble with a vast network of corridors and what seemed to be hundreds of rooms set aside for every possible hospital need.

I had long heard of the wonders of Irish hospitals, built and supported by the Irish Sweepstakes, and had often wondered whether the hospitals so subsidized and supported were as fine as I had heard they were. I decided to investigate for myself when I got to Ireland. However, what with one thing and another, the only hospital I ever investigated is the brand-new one, not yet in use, near Limerick. This was built and is heavily subsidized by the Sweepstakes and I don't see how anybody could hope for a better building. I thought how wonderful it would be if this great building could always remain just as I saw it then—empty and free from misery and disease. Wouldn't it be fine if it were never needed but could just stand by in case of emergency? While I was engaged in these meditations I was apprehended by a beefy, red-faced gent with a two days' stubble of beard who turned out to be the watchman and gave me a polite heave-ho.

Sean O'Brien told me a story in connection with the Sweepstakes that I like very much. It is about an old lady in Dublin who was reading the list of the names of the Sweepstakes winners. She read the whole list carefully and slowly and then she said happily,

"Isn't it a grand thing I didn't waste me money buying a ticket! Me name's not among the winners at all!"

Here's something else that amused me: At a crossroads near Limerick there is a monument to a champion weight lifter—a towering cube of cement with a cement ball under each corner. The Irish are not lovers of learning only; they are sportsmen from the heart out. They honor all champions, be they poets, politicians, patriots or lifters of weights. This monument is so naïve, so simple and honest, that it appealed to me enormously.

I wanted to see Tipperary for two reasons: one, I wanted to see what kind of town the soldiers were singing about when they sang "It's a long way to Tipperary"; and two, our friend John Crotty, the mailman in Durham, N. Y., was born in Tipperary and often speaks to us about it. I thought it would be fun to send Johnny a post card from his home town, since I was so near by.

Once Sean O'Brien stopped the car to inquire of a boy on a bicycle whether we were on the right road. The boy grinned at us and said, "Old Castle, New Castle, that's the way to Tip." I don't know what he meant, but that's certainly what he said. We got to Tip at any rate, without his help.

I was delighted and surprised to see that the country around Tipperary is very much like the Catskill country. The gently rolling landscape billows away until it piles up into little old mountains, dark against the horizon. I was homesick for a moment and I thought how strange it was that Johnny Crotty should have settled in a place so near like his original home. But the light on the Irish hills is very different from American light. At home we say fondly that the light on our mountains changes every few minutes. Every shift in the clouds brings out another and different ridge of hills, deepens or mutes the shadows on the roofs of faraway houses or barns, picks out a more vivid tint on mountainside and treetop. In Ireland every shift of cloud veils a hill, cloaks a mountain peak, makes misty and inscrutable some lovely feature of the

landscape. In America, light reveals. In Ireland, it conceals. America says, laughing, "See what *I've* got!" Ireland whispers, "Wouldn't you like to know?"

The town of Tipperary is like Catskill, N. Y., but older and with charm. The gestures of courtesy on the road are just like the greetings at home: a lifted finger, a salute, a raised hand. There is a five-and-ten-cent store in Tipperary much like our own; I suppose the Irish store is called a shilling-and-pence store, I don't know. I went there to buy Johnny's post card and while I was there I got him a packet of forget-me-not seeds, too, as a memento of the Old Sod.

The post office was just across the street and I went over to mail the card, thinking it would be nice to have the Tipperary postmark on it. When I went looking for the mailbox, however, I found nothing resembling a mailbox. At last I saw a wicker basket hanging from a nail on the wall, and deciding that this was a quaint and rural device I popped the card into it. I was about to leave when a young woman touched my arm.

She was laughing, and she said to me kindly, "Is it mailing the card you want to be?"

I said yes, it was mailing the card I wanted to be.

"That's for trash, the basket," she told me. "The post box is outside!" So I rescued my card and everybody in the post office smiled at me gently. I found the post box outside the building and sent Johnny's card on its way.

The world is smaller today than it used to be, but still, from where Johnny Crotty was, in the post office in Durham, Greene County, N. Y., U. S. A., to where I was standing outside the post office of Tipperary, County Tipperary, in Ireland, it is a long, long way. And the words of the old song came to me again, and I wondered what citizen of Tipperary had written it, longing for his home and for the girl he left behind him. I decided to investigate, and when I got back to the United States this is what I found out.

"It's a Long Way to Tipperary" was written during World War I by a music-hall singer named Jack Judge, who was born in Birmingham, Alabama. From all I could gather Jack Judge had never set foot on the Old Sod; but his parents came from County Mayo, Ireland. Jack Judge had some assistance with "Tipperary" from a Harry Williams, but Judge gets chief credit for being author and composer.

Although the song was written in wartime and has a marching rhythm, it is not what is generally called a war song. It is a simple, humble little song that never mentions war at all, but combines homesickness with longing for a sweetheart.

The song raced around the world. Soldiers' heavy, weary feet, slogging through mud for mile after mile, kept time to the rolling tune and were able to keep going because of it. Nice ladies, putting muslin packets of khaki-colored shirt buttons and little needle books into Soldier Kits in Hurryup, Wisconsin, or Wonderful, Maine, hummed delicately as their fingers flew. Little girls jumped rope to it; little boys peppered pigeons with popcorn to the tune of it. Boys and girls on moonlight excursions sang it between kisses. People who didn't know where Tipperary was and had no desire to go there sang it. And of all the millions who sang it, few knew anything but the chorus. The verses are not particularly appealing, either in words or melody; it's the grand rollicking chorus that people put their teeth and tonsils into.

Up to mighty London came an Irishman one day,
Since the streets were paved with gold, sure everyone was gay,
Singing songs of Piccadilly, Strand and Leicester Square,
Till Paddy got excited and he shouted to them there:

It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go,
It's a long way to Tipperary,
To the sweetest girl I know,

Goodbye, Piccadilly,
Farewell, Leicester Square,
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's right there.

Paddy wrote a letter to his Irish Molly-O,
Saying, "Should you not receive it, write and let me know,
If I make mistakes in spelling, Molly, dear," said he.
"Remember it's the pen is bad, don't lay the blame on me."

CHORUS

Molly wrote a neat reply to Irish Paddy-O,
Saying, "Mike Maloney wants to marry me, and so
Leave the Strand and Piccadilly, or you'll be to blame,
For love has fairly drove me silly, hoping you're the same."

CHORUS

What is there about this simple song that caught the whole world by the heart?

Before leaving for Ireland I received a letter from an exile from Tipperary who had read my book on New York, *Manhattan and Me*. He liked it, bless him, and wrote to tell me so. In thanking him, I mentioned that I was about to take off for Ireland and hoped to write a book about it. I received this letter from him in reply:

My dear Mrs. Atkinson: Here's a true story about Ireland that ought to fit into your book like the mainspring of a watch.—

Just watch for Tipperary and when you get near the River Thurles remember this:

My mother speaking (when Protestants were present), "One of my ancestors was a Protestant." (*Nose elevated.*) *"My great-grandfather and my great-grandmother used to go to church on Sunday. When they came to the crossroads they separated. He*

went to the left to the Protestant Church and she went to the Right to the Catholic Church; but one day the Grace of God entered his heart, he went to the Catholic Church, became converted, died and went to Heaven."

But people down by the River say the true story was this. They went to the crossroads all right, but this Sunday it was raining. Now the great-grandfather's name was Grant; he was a Scotchman and he had on a new suit of clothes and it was raining and the great-grandmother had an umbrella, so being a good Scotchman, he got under the umbrella, saved the suit of clothes, became a Catholic and died and went to hell.

Sincerely,
John Francis Quinn,

Newark, New Jersey

Well, we looked for the river and we saw it; we saw a crossroads, too, but whether it was Mr. Quinn's great-grandparents' crossroads we had no way of knowing. However, I include the story, and as you can see, it fits like the mainspring of a watch. An Irish watch.

I went into the town again, this time to have some lunch. Dobbyn's Hotel was down the street a way and there I had, among other good things, cloud-soft mashed potatoes, served by lovely wild-rose-cheeked Chrissie Piggott. Chrissie's hair is auburn and her eyes are clear and honest and bright. It was a treat to get such a good lunch, but a greater treat to have it served so neatly and so pleasantly by pretty, young Chrissie of Tip.

P.S. It costs a penny to go to the Ladies' in Dobbyn's.

Part II

Dublin and Around Dublin

Our headquarters in Dublin was the Shelbourne Hotel. This hotel is sedate and elderly, with a long reputation for distinguished service and excellent appointments. We had comfortable rooms there, two bedrooms at the end of a hall, making a kind of private suite. We could walk across the hall to visit each other without encountering anybody.

Miss Witlov's windows looked out over St. Stephen's Green and mine looked out on the rear of a collection of church buildings. There were cupolas and towers, ells, strange little windows almost covered with ivy. There were a school yard for boys and a school yard for girls—separated by a high brick wall—and although I studied the buildings often, I could never find beginning or end to them. It used to interest me enormously to speculate on what it was all like inside. What corridors, what winding stairs, what wide, uncharted territory lay behind those shabby old brick walls? It would have been a delightful experience to wander along those stone halls, peering into the gloomy rooms; but to be truly delightful, there would have to be a couple of children along.

Of course, the first thing Miss Witlov and I did when we were shown to our rooms was to call out, "Fire, fire, we want a fire!"

to the porter. He looked at us as a puppy looks at a bug and said haughtily, "There's central heating." We had heard that before and it was a lie. So, although we had not yet had time to take off our hats, we were sure we were cold, and we wanted to lay plans to be provided with heat. I went over to the radiator and laid a sceptical hand upon it. Heat! The radiator was warm! Miss Witlov, seeing the blank incredulity upon my face, scurried over and put her hand beside mine.

"Can it be possible?" she breathed. Then, with the cynicism bred of many days in Irish hotels, she said, "Well, it won't last long!" But it did. There was a blessed whisper of warmth from the Shelbourne radiators all day long and usually quite far into the night.

Now that we were settled in the Shelbourne and comfortable, and likely to be there for several weeks, I began to think it might be better to be somewhere else. I hatched the idea that it would be entertaining and enlightening to live in a boarding house with an Irish family and so I told Miss Witlov.

Miss Witlov was having her breakfast in bed. She was snug and warm there, and for a wonder, the sun was beaming brightly through her windows. Her breakfast was, she told me, excellent. But she looked at me with unbounded admiration when I suggested getting out of the pleasant Shelbourne, and she said in a thrilled tone, "Why! I think that's just the *best* idea. You go find us a nice *pension*; a nice Irish family to live with would show us what life is really like in Dublin!" I bade her adieu, after assuring her that I would leave no stone unturned to find us worse quarters than we had. Miss Witlov returned her attention to her egg, and I took the umbrella and went out.

My first day in Dublin turned out to be quite a day. I had sent messages to Coras Tractala Teoranta (the Irish Export Board) and to the Irish Tourist Bureau, announcing my arrival in Dublin. I had American introductions to both these organizations and they had kindly agreed to help me with my itinerary in connection with my book. Until I heard from them I was on my own. The

Head Porter in the Shelbourne told me that the best thing to do in making any trip around Dublin was to go to the Pillar and plot a course from there. Nelson's Pillar is the chief landmark.

I went out to the curb in front of the hotel and stood craning my neck to the left, looking for a bus. A very large one bore upon me from the right, since Irish traffic keeps to the left-hand side of the road, just the opposite of American traffic. My head was nearly sheared off and I leaped back, startled. A large policeman was looking at me, shaking his head as if in despair. I went over to him and asked which bus would take me to the Pillar. He laid a large, kind hand on my arm and said in his plushy Irish voice, "Ah, sure it's *me* that's the fool! I couldn't make out what you were up to, but I hear you're a stranger!" and he told me which bus to take.

At the bus stop a little group of people was waiting for the bus, among them a pretty brown-haired girl. As I stood looking at her and envying her freshness and glow, it began to rain. In a minute all her curly brown hair was spangled with raindrops, and since I had an umbrella, I felt it was only reasonable to offer her shelter beneath it. I moved closer to her and held my umbrella over her. She smiled at me gaily and thanked me. We began to talk. The bus came along and we climbed aboard. When the conductor came for the fares, she, having heard that I was Pillar-bound, paid my fare. When I expressed my surprise and gratitude, she laughed and said, "Ah, well, now you've had tuppenceworth of Irish hospitality!"

She told me that she was from Cork, that she worked in an office in Dublin and liked it pretty well. She thought the stores in Dublin were pretty good. The Irish climate, she had to admit, was pretty poor, but the weather recently had been pretty good, didn't I think? I thought she was delightful and was very happy to listen to any sentiments she cared to express, just for the pleasure of hearing her purling Irish voice. But before I realized it, we

were at the Pillar, where she was getting off, too. We bade each other farewell at the base of the Pillar.

"Good luck," I called to her. "God bless you," she answered.

Nelson's Pillar is the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building of Dublin. Everything is spoken of in respect to its distance from the Pillar. It is a monument erected to the glory of the English Admiral, Lord Horatio Nelson, and nobody in the touchy, chauvinistic city of Dublin seems to think it amusing that the outstanding landfall is a column honoring an Englishman. For sixpence you can climb to the top of this 134-foot tower and get a gratifying glimpse of the surrounding area. I forget how many steps there are to negotiate; more than I cared to undertake. I contented myself with looking up from the street below and nearly got run over again while I was gaping. It's no safer in Dublin than it is in New York City to stand and stare at a tall structure from the middle of a traffic lane.

From the Pillar it was easy to find my way to the Irish Tourist Bureau at 14 Upper O'Connell Street. I laid my problem of finding a *pension* on the desk before an earnest and helpful lady clerk. She made out a list of guest houses for me and told me that the one she recommended as best meeting my requirements was St. Anne's Guest House. She wrote the address down for me on a piece of paper along with instructions as to which bus to take and which street to get off at. I thanked her warmly and went off to find St. Anne's.

I would have been all right if I hadn't dawdled by the wayside. But I saw a large seed store and decided to investigate. I found exactly the same atmosphere that prevails in a large seed store at home in the spring of the year. Down on Courtlandt, Barclay and Warren Streets, in Manhattan, there are big, gloomy stores full of serious gardeners milling around, musing over various bulbs and rosebushes, engaging in elaborate arguments with other gardeners, or detaining busy clerks to inquire about the comparative merits of soil-testing kits or insecticides. Although it is undoubtedly

true that many citizens of Ireland find solace and delight in the horse, it gave me a comfortable feeling to know that there was a large chunk of the population which regarded gardening as of prime importance. The people in the Dublin seed store that spring day seemed to be exact duplicates of Americans in seed stores at home.

I decided to buy a packet of lavender seed. When I got back to Durham, N. Y., I'd plant a bed of Irish lavender. When the flowers bloomed, I'd pick them and dry them, and make sweet little bags of flowered cotton material and fill the bags full of dried lavender flowers and put the bags between sheets and pillow-cases in the linen closet and it would be marvelous. I bought a packet of lavender seed as the first step in this fragrant dream, and when I went to pay the cashier I left the list of guest houses from the Irish Tourist Bureau on the cashier's desk.

I discovered the loss as soon as I got into the street, but I was too stubborn to go back for it. I was sure I could remember the address and what bus to take and all about it. It had stopped raining and it was very pleasant in Upper O'Connell Street. I began to feel very powerful. I not only did not need the list, I hardly needed a bus, I was so full of enthusiasm. But just then the right bus appeared and I got on it as well as I could. Although New York has a mad pace and the traffic is enough to scare a man of brass, at least the buses are required to come to a dead stop to let you get on or off. In Dublin they slow down a *little* and you leap for the step with a grab at the handrail, if you are getting on; if you want to get off, you just fall off. Thus, when the bus slowed down, I made a flying leap and landed on the platform with my scarf, umbrella, pocketbook and the tails of my raincoat flying. There's a certain exhilaration about it; all it takes is a bit of practice, and after all, do you want to live forever?

I intended to use the bus ride to study the citizens of Dublin and perhaps come to some rather profound conclusions about them. But I was squeezed in so tight between people who were

taller than I was that I couldn't study anything except the best way to keep folks off my feet. When I paid my fare I asked the conductor to tell me when we got to the street I wanted and he nodded that he understood my problem and that my life was safe in his hands. Nevertheless, when we got to my street, he was on the upper deck of the bus collecting fares. A man on whose chest I was leaning told me with what amounted to enthusiasm that this was where I should get off, if the street I had named was the street I wanted. I thanked him, took the handle of my umbrella out of his raincoat pocket, ploughed my way to the platform and fell off the bus. By the time I had gone all through that, I had forgotten everything but the name of the guest house I was looking for. St. Anne's—that's all I could remember.

It was raining again and this time there was really some spirit in it. I stood there, in a downpour, in a perfectly strange part of a strange city, and wondered why I had ever left the Shelbourne Hotel. It seemed a very foolish thing to have done; but now it was St. Anne's or bust.

I concluded that anybody in the neighborhood would know about a guest house named St. Anne's. Since it was a guest house, St. Anne's would have to buy provisions and probably a butcher shop or grocery store would be able to give me the address. I stepped into the nearest grocery store, but nobody there, neither owners nor customers, had ever heard of St. Anne's and I got the distinct impression that nobody cared whether they ever *did* hear about it. I got almost the same reaction in the butcher shop. But I was not completely discouraged. I decided to telephone back to the Tourist Bureau and get them to tell me the address. All you need is a little resourcefulness and a clear head, and you can get along in any foreign city even if you know the language. I looked for a telephone.

I stepped into a bakery—no telephone booth that I could see. None in a dairy; none in a stationery store. I hunted like a hunted thing for a telephone and at last a nice girl in a tea shop explained

to me that public telephones are not in shops but are in booths at street corners. There was one a couple of blocks down, she said. My umbrella was by this time so saturated with rain that it kept no rain off me. But I slogged along, and finally I came to a tower-like shelter that was the telephone booth. I went in and shut the door. I was just able to do this, because the booth was very small and I with all my encasements and accouterments was pretty big.

All that remained was for me to make the call. From the book I got the number of the Tourist Bureau, and from my change purse I laid out an array of coins to put into the telephone slot. Irish pennies are about the size and color of breakfast pancakes and I had only a few of them. The other coins I had in change made up the exact amount needed to put through my call. So far I was lucky.

My umbrella was dripping into my galoshes and there was no room to move it elsewhere. My hands were stiff with cold, but I managed to get the foreign coins into the foreign machine and dial the foreign number. A lady with a very nice voice answered and told me regretfully that the number I had called was that of her private phone and not the Tourist Bureau as I thought. Now all my change was gone and I didn't know where I was. Oh, I knew where I was, in a certain sense. I was stuffed into a too-small telephone booth in a strange part of a strange city with rain streaming down outside and my umbrella dripping down inside and no more change and now I had forgotten the number. I considered weeping.

Cold and wet and forsaken, I leaned my head against the door of the telephone booth and was about to give way to tears when I began to get mad. Where was my husband, at a time like this? Wouldn't you think he'd be around to help me? A woman goes to all the trouble to marry a man, seems the least he could do would be to be on hand to help when everything goes wrong. But not *my* husband. Oh, no. Where was my husband? In London, that's

where, in the nice, warm Savoy Hotel, where they understand Americans and even cater to their whims and never let anybody get cold or lost and they always give you your phone numbers and just put them on the bill. There's where *my* husband was, probably having a good, nourishing lunch with Henry Sherrick or Sol Hurock, either one of whom would be delighted to have me as one of the party. Filling himself with the best food and hot coffee, into the bargain. If I ever caught sight of that man again, you could bet your life I'd tell *him* a thing or two. But, on the other hand, maybe I'd never see him again. Not him and not anybody. I'd be found lifeless and cold like the poor little Match Girl of the story and everybody would say what a shame, what a waste. Right on the floor of the phone booth, they'd find me, if I could manage to fall down on the floor in such tight space.

At that moment the sun came out; and in the completely inexplicable way of Irish roads and streets, the Dublin thoroughfare began to dry up and a sort of warmth began to penetrate into my boothlike coffin. I opened the phone booth door and stuck my pink nose out. It wasn't so bad outside. Wrapping my raincoat around me, and gripping the old umbrella, I set out to find St. Anne's or die in the attempt.

I walked briskly away from the busy intersection where I had left the bus and where I had had my encounter with the dial phone. No St. Anne's had been listed in the telephone book, but I decided that when I was looking up the address, or at least trying to, I had been in a state bordering on hysteria and probably couldn't even see it. I set my course in the direction that my nose was pointing and away I went.

This suburb of Dublin had wide, clean streets bordered with small brick-and-stone houses. It looked a little like Baltimore, Maryland. There was plenty of sky; there were plenty of streets, plenty of houses, but no people. The men were probably all at work, the children were probably all at school, and the women,

whatever they were up to, were invisible. I walked and walked and I began to feel as though I were in one of those sticky nightmares where no matter how much you try to move your feet won't operate.

At last, at the end of the street—the far end—a figure appeared. I decided that whoever it was, I would latch onto it like the Ancient Mariner and never let go until St. Anne's had been found. (To tell the truth, by this time I had forgotten why I wanted to find St. Anne's; it was just an isolated name.) When the moving object got close enough, I could see that it was a very personable young man. He looked at me with dark, startled eyes when I accosted him—the eyes of an Irish bachelor—and he stared about helplessly when I cried, "St. Anne's?" I tried to change my luck by pronouncing it "Sent Enne's," but even that had no effect.

The dark-eyed young man said he had never heard of St. Anne's, but, pointing to the house before which we were standing, he remarked hopefully that perhaps St. Anne's was nearby. In golden script scrawled across a glass panel of the front door were the words, "St. Jude's." The trail was growing warm. I almost bayed a little as I trotted to the right and to the left of St. Jude's seeking the longed-for words, "St. Anne's." But St. Jude's was alone in its saintliness, for no other saint's house was there.

"Wait a bit, now," said the handsome young man. "Here's somebody who surely will know."

Along the street, unnoticed by me until that instant, had crawled a larged red beetle that turned out to be a very small red car. Bending down and peering in, my handsome young man entered into rapid, soft-toned conversation with the driver of the beetle. I bent down and peered in, too, and found without displeasure that the driver of the car was a young man even handsomer than the one to whom I had originally appealed. This one was blond. The two were friends and they took my problem under consideration. Finally, the driver of the car opened the door next to me and indicated that I was to get into the car. I

did and the dark young man got in after me. The door was slammed and off we went at a good clip, me bunched between two of the pleasantest young men you'd meet in a Dublin day. Headed for where? I had no idea.

"This is Mr. Smith," said the dark young man, indicating the driver. The blond young man turned in my direction and showed two rows of large, white teeth in an extremely amiable grin.

"Mr. Smith," indeed! A likely story.

The little car put on what seemed to be, for so small a bit of mechanism, quite a burst of speed. I was wondering whether it would be rude to ask them where in the world we were going, when the car jolted to a short stop.

"Here we are," said the driver light-heartedly, and the dark young man hauled me, my raincoat, my umbrella and my tote bag out of the car onto the sidewalk. We had come about half a block from St. Jude's.

"Is this St. Anne's?" I quavered, but the young men just laughed.

"No, not St. Anne's," they told me kindly, "it's the Maples. Come along, now, and we'll see."

Inasmuch as I felt that my mind was now definitely unhinged, I turned to follow Mr. Smith as he opened an iron gate and led they way across a small paved yard. The first young man, after making a few polite murmurs, disappeared. Mr. Smith went up the steps of the house, which was at the corner of the street and rang the bell. In just a minute a tall girl in maid's uniform opened the door and we went in.

"Have you ever heard of St. Anne's Guest House, Rose?" asked Mr. Smith.

Rose, blushing fit to bust, had to admit that she never had.

"Ah, well, come in and rest a bit," said Mr. Smith, and he guided me into an old-fashioned dining room, complete with oblong dining table and dining chairs, china cabinets and lace curtains. There was a small settee in front of one of the windows

and he seated me there and left me alone. I was sunk in meditation almost at once, wondering how it is that I never fail to get involved in the most peculiar situations.

Soon Mr. Smith returned and sat down near me and we had a good chat. Mr. Smith was tall, personable and slim, with a straightforward manner. I liked him at once and Mr. Smith seemed to think that I would pass in a pinch. I told him I was from New York and wanted to find a place to live with an Irish family.

He came to the point at once. "Americans," Mr. Smith said, "are one hundred percent." He went on to tell me that he and his sister own the Maples, which is a boarding house. The Maples specializes in athletes: basketball teams and the like. That very day and hour the West Point Basketball team was due. (West Point, U. S. A.? I didn't know.) But for this imminent arrival Mr. Smith said he would take me in his beetle and we would hunt for St. Anne's Guest House until it was found. He, too, had been unable to find it listed in the telephone book. He and Rose had just looked for it. I murmured that St. Anne's seemed a long way from the Pillar and that I preferred to be more centrally located. Mr. Smith agreed.

"Yes," Mr. Smith said thoughtfully, "Americans are one hundred percent and I'm the one should know it. Last year I went to Labrador on an engineering project. I'm an engineer. The project was backed mostly by American money—what isn't? I was in Labrador almost a year," he said, "and whilst there I never drew my money. Just let it lie there and accumulate, except for a few shillings spending money now and then. So, when the work was finished, I found I had a young fortune at my disposal. I'd had enough cold weather to last me a lifetime and off I went to Bermuda for a holiday. That's where I met the Americans and they were one hundred percent! They all kept inviting me to their homes in the States and after a while I saw that they really meant it! I went back to New York—and it was full of friends! I could be there yet, the invitations I got!

"Oh, I like America," said young Mr. Smith. "There's a classless society there you don't find anywhere else. Everybody works. Even the girls work, even when they don't have to. You'd never find an Irish girl doing that!"

Mr. Smith said he gave up the engineering profession to return to Dublin and run the Maples, which he indicated was lucrative enough to warrant his doing so. He handed me a card which read:

THE MAPLES
81 Iona Road
Glasevin
Dublin
Phone 793471—Visiting Theatrical Parties;
Athletes; Wedding Receptions a Speciality
Mrs. E. Smith

Mrs. E. Smith, Mr. Smith's mother, had turned the management of the Maples over to her son and daughter. Mr. Smith showed me his fingernails.

"They're chewed to the bone," he said, "so you can see it's not all easy."

Now he confided to me that he was going to be married the next week, to an Irish girl. I remarked that it was a wonder that some enterprising American girl had not captured him while he was in my country. I asked him whether this situation had not perhaps arisen, or whether he did not like American girls. He sighed and said he certainly did like American girls, but that was all over now. He showed me his fingernails again.

Since I had come to the conclusion that St. Anne's was a lost cause, he apologized again for having to wait for the West Point Basketball team. Otherwise he would have driven me back to the hotel; as it was, he had called a taxi for me. The maid, Rose, now appeared to say that the taxi had arrived, and so I bade Mr. Smith

good-by. He shook my hand cordially as he turned me over to the taxi man.

"In my book Americans are one hundred percent," he said.

The taxi man was a beardless Santa Claus, ruddy nose, jelly-like paunch and all. He was dressed, not in ermine and red, but in a sober business suit. However, the suit was the only sober thing about him, for he was redolent of spirits and had a rollicking air. Putting his arm about me, he swung me merrily out the door and through the little yard. He hoisted me into his car and tucked my skirts with great care around my calves and under my knees. Then he jammed himself behind the wheel and, singing a happy tune, guided the car into the street. He pointed out many places of interest as we passed them and waved a disdainful hand in the direction of a shopping center.

"Grafton Street, and well named, too. You pay twenty-five percent more over there than you do over here. You shouldn't pay too much for anything, now should you?" Between such small items of interest, he sang to me in a well-worn baritone until we drove up in front of the Shelbourne with what amounted to a flourish.

"Seven miles, seven shillings," he caroled, and when I weak-mindedly gave him ten shillings, he drove away singing more happily than ever.

I had been seven miles out of Dublin since I left right after breakfast. I had had no lunch and it was now nearly five o'clock. As I waited for the elevator, I glanced into a plate-glass mirror beside the elevator and cringed at the reflection it gave me.

" 'Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
Who's the fairest one of all?' "

I murmured.

"Not you, that's for sure," the mirror answered crossly.

When the elevator door opened, out stepped Miss Witlov. Fresh as a peach blossom, rested, nicely made up, serene and eager.

"Well," she said breathlessly when she met me, "did you find a *pension*?"

I looked at her blankly.

"*What pension?*" I asked.

It soon became clear to Miss Witlov that I had not found a nice Irish family to live with and she professed to be just as well satisfied as if I had. While I had been moving heaven and earth to locate St. Ann's, Miss Witlov had been busy, too. One thing she had accomplished was to discover that Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* was to be given that night, the last performance of the season by the Abbey Players. Miss Witlov had bought tickets, and after dinner we were off.

The Queen's Theatre was being used by the Abbey Players because their own theatre, the Abbey, was being remodeled and renovated. The Queen's is a theatre so small, so shabby and so uncomfortable that we felt as though we might be attending a theatre in New York City. (Except for those which are managed by the genius Louis Lotito, most New York legitimate theatres are a disgrace.) The Dublin audience was better dressed than theatre audiences in Moscow, and not so well dressed as theatre audiences in New York. But they were a very knowing lot. They snapped at the O'Casey lines like trout after May flies and swallowed the words in laughter before they were half spoken.

From the comments of people around us, we gathered that the performance was not a brilliant one by Dublin standards; but two visitors from New York thought it was excellent. (I was told by an ardent Irish theatre-goer that in Dublin, when a new play is produced, it appears for the first time on a Monday night, but the Wednesday night audience is considered, if not the most important, then the most representative. The Monday-nighters are the professionals; the Tuesday-nighters are the Dubliners; but the Wednesday night audience is some strange mixture of professionals and laity that is the cream of the theatre-going public.)

After the play was over, Miss Witlov and I went out into the black night of Dublin and the theatre snapped shut after us. Private cars swooped down and gathered up a lot of people; others walked away into the darkness. No cabs came along, and in five minutes Miss Witlov and I were alone on the empty street. We based some hope on a man who was walking backward down the middle of the gutter, making signs at cars that were trying to get past. He came back into the light of the theatre several times, but just when we were about to ask him where we could get a cab, he backed down into the shadows and never returned. Then the lights of the theatre went out. Lost, in blackest Dublin.

It was the second time that day that I had been lost and I was getting sick of it.

We went across the street to a small tobacco shop and asked the shop man where we could get a taxi.

"Go up to the clock," he said, and shunted us out the door and snapped off *his* lights.

"Go up to the clock"? *What* clock? *Where?*

We clung to each other and began tottering along the stygian street. Miss Witlov suddenly gave out with a shriek.

"*Tax-eee,*" she squeaked, "*tax-eee!*"

I was violently startled and a group of pedestrians who had suddenly appeared on the other side of the way stared, embarrassed, at this exhibition. They didn't *say*, "Americans." They didn't have to; it was obvious.

I had often heard the expression, "shrieking like a banchee," but until that moment I had never realized what it could mean.

Miss Witlov, head held low to watch where her feet were stepping, since it was almost impossible to see an inch ahead in the darkness, howled again, "*Tax-eee,*" to my most intense discomfort. I waggled her arm gently, indicating that her performance was not in good taste. Now I could tell that she had really lost interest in getting a cab. She was concentrating on embarrassing me; she was being very naughty. At every fourth

step she would let out a shrill scream, and I couldn't make up my mind whether to leave her flat or to give her a good shake. Although it was certainly not later than eleven-thirty, Dublin was as dark and as dismal as the Gobi Desert at the same hour. The great, empty silence around us was what made Miss Witlov's vocalizing all the more shocking. That eerie voice splitting the decent quiet of the Dublin night made me want to run and hide, or at least to disown Miss Witlov. But now, at last, we came to a kind of crossroads and there in the middle of the street was a covey of taxis under a large, dimly lighted clock.

The drivers, of whom there were several, standing in a sociable group, turned their backs to us and made out they didn't see us when they heard my friend's voice; like tearing silk it split the night air again and again. "*Tax-eee!*" They not only made no effort to come to us; they all ran and hid in a comfort station when they saw us approaching. But we waylaid one very small driver who lacked the agility to outwit us.

"*Tax-eee*," screamed Miss Witlov, into the man's very face. Having hit the pitch she wanted, she was loath to give over, even though her goal had been achieved. The driver sighed, swung open the taxi door and let us climb in. We used the time on the drive back to the Shelbourne to complain about the taxi system in Dublin. We didn't understand it then and we don't understand it now. At home, in New York, a cab seeker steps out into the street, hails a cab and that's it. Of course there are no cabs in rainy weather or at the rush hours, but there is a certain rhythm about it and you seldom have to wait more than ten minutes or so. You cannot call up anywhere and tell a cab to come for you. In the city of New York, there is no way to call a cab by phone. But I'll say this: You know a taxi when you see one: it has a light on the roof in plain sight. Not in Dublin.

You *can* phone for a cab in Dublin, if you can find a phone, know what number to call and have the right amount of change to put in the phone machine. If you are where cabs congregate,

in a school of cabs, so to speak, you can get a cab. But a stranger alone in a lonely part of Dublin is a gone goose.

How to tell a cab when you see one is another problem for a stranger. All Irish automobiles seem to be painted a decent dark black and taxis are no exception. To me they are completely indistinguishable from any other black sedan. I asked our little taxi man to explain about taxis and he sighed again and said patiently "Sometimes there's a small light at one side of the windshield. At night I mean. Not always, though. By day—well—just *look* at the car. There's a sign on the windshield that says"—and he spelled it for me—" 'TAXI.' But not always. Don't count on it."

When he had deposited us at the Shelbourne he could scarcely wait to be off. He was scared of us, that was plain. The hotel porter helped Miss Witlov carefully up the curb and through the lobby to the elevator. He had to. She was laughing so hard she could scarcely walk.

"Tax-eee," she murmured shamelessly. I bade her good night rather coldly. The wretch.

When I opened my eyes the next morning, I was glad to see that the weather was bad. In view of such a day, I would spend the time regathering my somewhat spent strength. After breakfast, however, the sun came out and the air that blew through the windows had a smell of spring in it. I began to think that it was a shame to waste this Dublin day; it was turning out to be what they called a pet day—no day to spend mooning around a hotel bedroom.

I went across the hall to confer with Miss Witlov, whom I had decided to forgive for her mischief of the night before. While I had been idling, she had been busy. She had effected a change in her sleeping quarters.

"There was no place to *put* anything," she said, scowling at a floor-to-ceiling wardrobe full of shelves and hooks. Miss Witlov

had summoned the housekeeper and after a conference with her was getting settled all over again and was very happy.

After hearing Miss Witlov's complaints about not having any place to put anything—the tall wardrobe notwithstanding—the housekeeper had sent in an eight-foot hatrack of dark, polished wood; all spikes and soaring loops. The kind of thing that would come in very handy at an Elks' convention. Miss Witlov had already draped this thing with sweaters, fur scarves, skirts, raincoats and ulsters. She was adding a few more when I came in, and appeared to be thoroughly contented. In addition to the hatrack, she had asked to be given a large table. This had been supplied, too. It looked like part of an old sideboard. What it lacked in elegance, however, it made up in acreage. Its top was already neatly covered with piles of newspapers, cables from all over the world (it was Miss Witlov's birthday and everybody on earth except me had taken cognizance of that fact), magazines, literature about Ireland, guidebooks, maps and so on.

"Now I can really be comfortable," said my friend brightly, surveying her new furniture with what almost seemed to be affection.

I forebore mentioning her bad conduct of the night before, but I could see by her air of seeming preoccupation, and the way she avoided meeting my eye, that *she* remembered and was delighted with herself.

"I'm going to see the Book of Kells, later on," she told me. "If you have no other plans, why don't you come along?"

I felt pretty meek. I had forgotten the Book of Kells, and this was the perfect time to go to see it. After Miss Witlov had carefully chosen a suitable Book-of-Kells-seeing costume from her new hatrack, she dressed herself, and off we went.

One of Ireland's dearest treasures is the Book of Kells. If you visit Ireland, all is lost unless you can say that you have seen this book. So Miss Witlov and I, like thousands of other obedient

tourists, climbed the fine old staircase of Trinity College to reach the Long Room where the treasure lies.

A more appropriate setting could not be imagined. The atmosphere is all of ancient wisdom, and mystic reserve. It is like a cathedral there, and where the Book of Kells lies is almost like an altar.

"A real hall of learning," murmured Miss Witlov as we moved along to the ark, which is a glass case.

What you see when you peer into the locked glass box is a whitish book a little more than a foot square. It lies open, showing a few lines of unintelligible script and a cryptic, rather involved picture or design. The lettering is rather dim; the colors used in the illumination are rather pale. At first glance—and perhaps even after a long scrutiny—the book shows little to interest or startle the ordinary visitor. They say one page a day is turned, so that even if you were interested enough to want to see the whole book, it would take a very long time to get to look at all of it.

So this is the famous Book of Kells. What is there about it that makes it so revered and so cherished? Even Miss Witlov, an earnest worshiper at the shrines of tradition, came away feeling a little disappointed.

I found myself thinking crossly: "What's so remarkable about a little old book?" Well, there *is* something remarkable about it; a whole lot *very* remarkable about the queer old volume that seems to stare sulkily back at unsympathetic spectators, somewhat as a fine old lion stares in stately scorn at the scrimy people who make faces at it through the bars of its cage.

I have since investigated the history of the Book of Kells, and now I can hardly wait to go back to Dublin and apologize to that ancient monarch and to look at it with new, admiration-filled eyes.

The Book of Kells is more than a thousand years old. It was made by scribes and illuminators in the childhood of Irish civilization, probably in the eighth century A.D.

It is called the Book of Kells for one of two reasons: Either it was made by monks of Kells in County Meath, or it was made somewhere else and brought to Kells and used there in the church, becoming identified with Kells in that way. Nobody seems to know for sure.

The book is about the life of Christ as told in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is based on a fourth-century version of these Gospels as written by St. Jerome. It is a ritualistic book that was used in the Roman Catholic ceremonies and left on the altar as a holy ornament when not in use.

The text of the book is not in classical Latin nor even entirely in the Vulgate, but is a sort of Irish version of Latin.

The illuminations and illustrations were made by artists of high skill and rich imagination. They worked with pens made from the quills of ducks or geese. The inks and pigments were made by hand, of course, from native materials; they are of such purity and excellence that they have endured almost undimmed to the present time.

The pages of the book are made of vellum—calfskin, kidskin, goatskin, pigskin—anything available—and all finished by crude methods of the period, which nonetheless have resisted time in a miraculously enduring way.

Rebinding has been done from time to time; the present pigskin cover was put on in 1895. Some enthusiastic bookbinder cropped the edges of the pages once, cheerfully hacking off parts of the colored pictures; and some parts of the book are missing altogether. Only 318 of the known 340 folios are shown in the glass case in the Trinity College Library. The other twenty-two, having broken away from the binding, have been removed for safekeeping. (A folio is a sheet, folded once, making four pages. Thus eighty-eight pages are not shown at present.)

The first known home of the Book of Kells was an Irish community called Kells on the shores of the Blackwater River in County Meath. This community was complete with castle, round

tower, abbey and ancient cross (said to contain a sliver of the true cross). Kells was one of the most famous and the wealthiest of Irish monasteries. It had a long, bloody history full of pillagings, burnings and devastations of one kind and another. The solid little Book of Kells comes down through the centuries to its present comfortable bed in the glass case in the college library after a hard life, full of exhausting adventures. It was not always the pampered darling it is today, although it has had long intervals of glory.

It was originally kept in a fine golden casket, and in 1006 somebody who lusted after gold stole both casket and book. The gold he dared to keep. The book, being sacred, terrified the thief and he buried it in the earth, where it remained for several months, until found by some monks who had learned (probably in the confessional) where it could be found. The golden casket was never recovered, but the book survived its muddy burial and was cleaned up and restored to its altar. That was merely the first of a long list of ups and downs. It has been rescued from fires, lost, forgotten, remembered, found and lost sight of again through the ages. Once some ignorant porter threw the Book of Kells, along with a number of other precious books and manuscripts, into an unlocked room of Dublin Castle, where it was left to molder in the damp and cold for more than five years. Yet still the vellum survived, still the colors of the inks and the pigments resisted the tarnishing and weatherings of time.

In 1661 it finally came into the possession of the University of Dublin and it has been taking it easy ever since.

How long will the present life of luxury continue? The old Book of Kells tells time by the century, not by the year. Can it survive the Atomic Age?

This strange and revered book was made when civilization in Ireland was young and not one person in thousands could write. The centers of education and learning were the monasteries; few besides the monks could lay any claim to "book learning." The

laity not only could not write, but could not, of course, read anything written. To such people the mere sight of even one word in script upon a piece of parchment was a thing so unearthly that it sent a shiver of awe through them. They got what information they had by word of mouth; writing was awe-ful in the strictest sense. Since writing was enough to astound these simple souls, small wonder that an entire book—and what a book!—was enough to seem the word of God made manifest.

When the Book of Kells was made even the learned monks were very childlike. The world of those days was a world deep in darkness and fear. People in the monasteries were isolated from the outside world for the most part, or at any rate little-traveled. They were nurtured on ancient tales and the world of the imagination was realer to them than reality. When the scribes and illuminators conceived and made the Book of Kells it was their dreams and imaginings that appeared, rather than representations of anything they had ever seen.

Another reason for the cryptic and all but unintelligible pictures lies in the fact that the material was regarded as sacred and too holy for the eyes of ordinary man. These artists wished to praise God in the way they knew best—through their art; yet they were jealous of the information the book would contain. It was to be a book for sacred use, kept safe and secure on the altar of the church, yet who could tell into what hands it might fall, under whose eye their secrets might somehow come? In order to confuse, astound and mystify any profane observer, the contents of the book were made as enigmatic and obscure as the artists could contrive. It has been said that this obscurity is meant to veil the text like a cloud of incense. The glorification of God is not for the amusement of the common man.

It is small wonder, then, that this book should have become famous even so far away as Europe and should have influenced much of the design of other church books and manuscripts. Two forms of Celtic design are used freely in the Book of Kells. The

first is the geometrical form: bands, knots and designs formed by eight lines interlacing and crossing in many variations. The second makes use of all natural forms: man, foliage, birds, reptiles, fish and imaginary and monstrous animals that seem to have stepped out of time-before-man.

About 1949, a Swiss publisher named Urs Graf-Verlag, of Berne, undertook a photographic reproduction of the Book of Kells. It was made with exquisite care, using all the newest photographic methods. Sample pages were submitted to the University of Dublin, and upon the approval of this institution, an edition of five hundred volumes was produced. (As each page was made, it had to be approved by a University of Dublin committee before it could be included in the new book.) The reproduction of the Book of Kells sold for a prepublication price of $375 and after publication for $400. In America, Philip C. Duschnes of 757 Madison Avenue handled these books.

Of the five hundred books published, a great many were purchased by people and organizations in this country. There is almost sure to be a copy of this great reproduction edition in a library or in some university near any large city in the United States and there are several copies in Canada. For instance, here are a few of the places where the book may be seen: In Canada, Trinity College, Toronto; in the United States, the American Irish Historical Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Public Library, all in New York City; the Cincinnati, Ohio, Public Library; the Southern Methodist University Library, Dallas, Texas; Temple University Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California; and the Boston, Massachusetts Public Library. These places are freely accessible to anybody with clean hands and a pure heart, and the best way to learn about the Book of Kells is to examine the reproduction edition. Then you will understand the original when you see it.

You will not just stare at it lumpishly, as I did, and wonder where the wonder lies.

Even these reproductions are precious and comparatively rare. The edition of five hundred has long ago been sold, and there will be no more. The type has been distributed and the plates for the black-and-white reproductions of the pictures have been destroyed. The color plates are in the Swiss National Library at Berne, subject to the control of the University of Dublin. So even if you examine a reproduction, you are handling a rare and exquisite volume produced with accuracy and affection. A copy is, after all, merely a copy, and the essence of the original cannot be caught, but a reproduction can be studied and the original cannot. I strongly urge anybody who has seen the Dublin book to find a reproduction and examine it carefully. Only in this way can the strange and exotic characteristics of the illuminations and the script be observed and appreciated. You can open a door for yourself that will show you vistas never before suspected.

The book consists of script and illustrations. You can see that although the script flows along, as calligraphy should, each separate letter has been given individuality. Letters are minutely embellished by the addition of tendrils or groups of small circles or a hint of leaves. I have been told that no letter is repeated in identical form; there is always some variation, however slight. Sometimes, in elaborating a letter, the artist got so excited and inspired that he turned it into a little riot of animals or foliage and it is almost impossible to decipher the letter at all.

The large initial pages are the book's greatest beauty. Some initials take up a whole page against a background and overlay of the most intricate ornamentation. The whole work bespeaks the labor of artists whose lives were adoringly devoted to the work under their hands, to whom time meant nothing. Steeped in fantastic old tales, close to the beginnings of so many aspects of life, they depicted their saints and their animals childishly and

fantastically. The heart becomes filled with loving amusement at a world so grotesque and whimsical.

The book based on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John uses four symbols for the saints. Matthew is represented by a man, Mark by a lion, Luke by a calf or ox, and John by an eagle. These symbols appear throughout the book in infinite variation —sometimes as a large portrait in color, sometimes as a minute figure in a sylvan scene, or merely in decoration of a word or a letter. Wherever such a symbol appears, it is a reminder that the Sacred Four are the theme and center of the book.

To say that the black ink used has proved to be very durable is certainly an understatement. It is almost as black today as when some monkish hand drew the lines on the vellum. Corrections are sometimes made in brown ink, sometimes in red. A wide range of colors was used by the illuminators, but usually subdued tones, in keeping with the holiness of the subjects. Black, red, blue and yellow are freely used, but no gold appears anywhere in the book. One gets the impression of gold, strangely enough, yet none whatever has been employed. Experts and scholars feel that this indicates that no gold was available at that time or in whatever place the book was made, or it would surely have been added.

The childlike manner in which the book is written shows that the art of writing was rather new and that rules of punctuation and spelling had not hardened into any generally accepted form. For instance, sometimes a period is indicated by three dots, sometimes by two. A comma is sometimes four dots, but not always. A dot inside a letter (*o* or *a*) means that the letter should be deleted. If by mistake a letter was left out, it has been inserted anywhere, just so long as they got it back in there somehow. When the length of the lines was not regular, thus offending the eye of the artist, short lines were sometimes filled out by material that properly belonged in the line below. It is amusing to realize that the people who were drawing these letters not only lost sight of the meaning of the words in the fever of their

inspiration, but probably thought nobody would know the difference, anyhow.

So, if you will ask permission to see one of the great reproduction volumes, with its exact and marvelous color photographs of the fine old original, you will be able to walk up to the glass case in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and look the Book of Kells straight in the eye. You will have earned the right to say, "Old fellow, I know all about you and you richly deserve your great reputation."

When we returned to the Shelbourne Hotel I found a letter waiting for me from Coras Tractala Teoranta. They enclosed an itinerary for me, and before I examined it carefully I felt very much excited. Now, I thought, I'll really get under the skin of this strange city of Dublin. I will visit poets and playrights and artists and listen to the heartbeat of Ireland. I remembered reading that the Irish author Oliver St. John Gogarty had written about his city: "There is nowhere a wittier, a cheerfuller or a more good natured crowd than in Dublin."

Remembering this, I had listened with both ears while walking the streets of Dublin and nobody had said anything witty while I was listening. Everybody was trotting amiably about their affairs, cheerful and good-natured, but witty—no. I longed to be in the center of some situation where a Dublin crowd would collect and get witty. I must say I was convinced that the wit was there, because I believed Gogarty. All I say is, I hadn't found any yet.

Sean O'Casey, the playwright, once said to me—and his eyes were sparkling with mischief—"The motto of the City of Dublin is: 'The glory of the city is the obedience of the people!'" He tipped his head back, shut his eyes and opened his mouth very wide in an ecstasy of sardonic amusement. "The o-*bay*-junce of the people!" he said again, and shook with silent laughter.

I asked Miss Cohalen of the American-Irish Society Library

to verify this for me, since Sean O'Casey is not above pulling anybody's leg, including mine. Miss Cohalen's translation of the Latin motto was," The obedience of the citizens makes for a serene city," which has a slightly different connotation. Nevertheless, the main idea seems to be that the people of the city of Dublin hold the well-being of the city in their hands.

After only a couple of days in Dublin, I began to feel what later I became sure of: I would never understand Dublin. It was, and it remained for me, a mysterious city. I never felt "at home" there. And is that bad? If I had wanted to feel at home, I could have stayed in New York. In Dublin I met new ideas and new psychology and saw new points of view. Not "new" exactly, but certainly different.

But now that the C.T.T. people were about to take me in hand, I felt sure that all the secrets of Dublin would unroll before me and that I would be able to see the beating heart of the city, pulsating strong and sure.

I opened the letter and read the following:

PROGRAM ARRANGED FOR MRS. BROOKS ATKINSON

Tuesday, May 17	10 A.M.	Miss Nelli Mulcahy, Couture
	11:45	Miss Sybil Connelly, Couture
	3 P.M.	Miss Irene Gilbert, Couture
	3:30	Mr. Redington—Designer, Gaelterra Eireann Handwoven Tweeds
Wednesday, May 18	11:45 A.M.	Arts and Crafts Exhibition, Brown Thomas Department Store
	2 P.M.	Victor Waddington Galleries, art exhibit—ceramics by John Ffrench
	4	Crock of Gold Handwoven Tweeds—Michael Farrell

Thursday, May 19	11 A.M.	Guinness Brewery and
	1 P.M.	lunch at Guinness'
	3	Avoca Handwoven Tweeds, Avoca, Wicklow
Friday, May 20	10:30 A.M.	Gateaux Cakes—with Mr. Killeen
	12 noon	Mary Francis Keating (food expert and newspaper columnist), Shelbourne Hotel
	1 P.M.	Lunch at Gresham Hotel
	4	National Stud, Tully, Kildare
Saturday, May 21	11 A.M.	F. & J. Clayton, Navan, Meath (Millwoven Tweeds)
	12:30 P.M.	Lunch at Aclare House
	4	Balreask Stud, Navan, Meath—Mrs. May Clarke
Monday, May 23	11 A.M.	Tullamore Distillery (Irish Mist and Tullamore Dew), whisky
	1:30 P.M.	Lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Roche, Director of Irish Ropes, Newbridge—followed by visit to factory
Tuesday, May 24	10:30 A.M.	Steele and Co., candies
	3:30 P.M.	Jacobs Biscuit Factory
	4:30	M. and P. Hanlon, Corporation Fish Market
Wednesday, May 25	10 A.M.	Bord na Mona-Comm, peat—all-day visit
Thursday, May 26	10:30 A.M.	Harry Clarke Ltd., stained glass
	12 noon	Irish Sugar Co.
Friday, May 27	FREE DAY	Whit Week-end—race meetings, etc.

I showed the typed sheets to Miss Witlov, who read them carefully, if incredulously.

"But that's an industrial survey!" she cried. "Is that what you wanted?"

"It's not what I wanted, but it's what I've got," I told her. I felt blank and bewildered. But when I reread the program, I began to feel that this method of approach was going to be far more rewarding than talking to poets and playwrights, which is what I'm doing at home, all the time. It would even be better than listening on Dublin street corners. I went to the telephone to thank the C.T.T. and to tell them I was ready to start as soon as they were.

What followed for the next ten days was a nonstop dance marathon. First, I went to C.T.T. and met Mr. Dermot O'Regan, the trade adviser, and his assistants, Mrs. Kay Peterson and Mr. Michael Killeen. Beginning at once, they swung me from one to the other in a Dublin all-hands-round. I executed some pretty fancy figures in that breathless dance. And when it was all over and the dust had settled, I realized that I had been very lucky indeed to have covered so much territory in such a short time. I had met people I would never have encountered, in circumstances and surroundings I would never have known about, without C.T.T. My ten days in Dublin were eye openers for everybody concerned.

My first day was spent in the *haut couture*. I went to the shops of Sybil Connelly and Irene Gilbert, both well-known designers who have had their products shown at many international exhibitions. Miss Connelly is perhaps the best known, she seems to be the Dior of Dublin. Miss Gilbert's gowns and suits are extremely attractive and very chic and too famous to need my accolades. When I visited these two shops I did my best to look like a visiting American style expert, but I don't think I fooled anybody.

It was with Miss Nelli Mulcahy that I really fell in love. If any American lady visiting Dublin wishes to take back home a delight-

ful and most unusual souvenir, I strongly recommend paying a visit to Miss Mulcahy and having her make a dress or suit. The designs shown there seem to me to be particularly suited to the American taste and particularly suited to teen-agers or smart and lively young ladies in their twenties. The lines are crisp and smart and the colors are imaginative and freshly used.

Miss Mulcahy is a dedicated and determined young woman who looks like a high-style model herself—tall and lissome, dark-haired and wide-eyed. Since she always hoped to have an atelier of her own, she studied design in Paris and then went to work as a needlewoman in the workrooms of Fath—so she knows all about her work, from drawing board to finished garment. Her whole short life is a history of her struggle and determination to become a leader of Irish design, and her feet are surely on the middle rungs of the ladder now.

Her workroom and showroom are on the third floor of a gloomy, shaky old house. But the samples she shows there contradict the shabbiness of the surroundings. The Mulcahy clothes combine Irish wit with French daring.

The first things that caught my attention were some sweaters from the island of Aran, of a smoky-colored wool quite different from anything I had ever seen. Miss Nelli told me that the effect was obtained through the use of natural wool from white sheep and black sheep, spun and knit together without bleaching or dyeing. The sweaters were turtle-neck, bulky and very chic, made to be worn with what we call "skinny pants" of sleek, thin black woolen material. A stunning costume for skiing, and warm, too.

She showed me an orangy tweed called Vitamin A—after the vitamin found in carrots—a most unusual color made up in a crisp, youthful style. There was a delicate pink evening gown, all horizontal pleats from neck to bouffant hem, called Venetian Blind; all it needed was an American beauty to wear it. There was a costume called "Pickpocket's Paradise," made with saucy pockets all over, it seemed to me. No use going on. The clothes

were full of youthful bounce and impudence, and instead of trucking home trunkfuls of junk to teen-aged daughters or youthful relatives I suggest a Nelli Mulcahy suit or dress. A teen-ager I know said, "It would make the gang flip their lids."

Miss Mulcahy's prices are: worsted suits, $105; tweed suits, $100; evening gowns, from $135—all approximate, of course. Overseas visitors are given special attention and orders can usually be filled in ten days—all custom work from samples. Miss Mulcahy's address is 30 South Frederick Street and her telephone is Dublin 6-1043.

I don't know who in Dublin wears the lovely clothes of the *haut couture.* The women I saw in shops, in the theatres, on the streets and in restaurants, dress in a kind of town-and-country manner; expensive clothes expected to last a lifetime. There is the climate to fight, of course, and when that is an ever present problem, the clothes take on a dreary hue. Admittedly I was not in Dublin very long and admittedly I was not circulating in the highest social circles all the time. The fact remains that most Dublin women I saw dress like Bostonians. And while this is refined, it definitely has little flair and less chic.

All the time I was in Dublin I was reminded of the old song

Oh, Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in her hair,
And London is a man's town, tee dum tee dum tee dair.

No doubt about it, Dublin is a man's town too. The women dress rather primly and the men are the ones who shine. There's a swing and a dash about Dublin men that is downright theatrical. Even the gentlemen in business suits have a restrained swank about the way they wear their clothes. And as for the sporting enthusiasts, they are stunning. There's none of the relaxed sloppiness of New York play clothes; I'll guarantee there's not a man's "maternity shirt" in Dublin—men don't walk along the streets without coats and with their shirttails hanging loose over their trousers. For one

thing, there's the climate again—there never come the blazing days of a New York summer. But the Dubliners seem to prepare with care for going to the races or going shooting (as hunting is called) or fishing. Sports clothes are made of wonderful materials and the wonderful materials are beautifully tailored. And it's every man for himself so far as design goes. Dublin tailors must love the lives they lead. I remember looking with awe and admiration at one elderly ruddy-faced gentleman who was evidently setting out for a day at the races. He wore a gray herringbone tweed suit, and over it a fingertip-length jacket of a darker gray, lined with gray fur that looked like squirrel. He was as careful as a model to keep the edge of the coat turned back so the lining would show. He wore a rakish gray cap at an extremely jaunty angle on his bald, pink head.

It was in Dublin that I saw my first "Teddy Boys." I had heard about "Teddy Boys" in London, but meeting a couple at close range was an exciting experience. Two of them, followed by a baggage laden valet apiece, came into the Shelbourne one day when I was waiting for a friend. I felt as though I had suddenly whipped back through time to the days of stagecoach travel and swashbuckling young aristocrats making the Grand Tour.

These two were very handsome youths and their costumes might have been designed by David Ffolkes or Motley. One of the young men wore a wide-brimmed felt hat with a tapering crown; a long plume would not have seemed amiss on such a hat, but the Teddy Boy had not gone so far as that. He had on a fawn-colored, knee length overcoat with a fur collar and fawn-colored tapering trousers of a satiny, plain wool. He carried binoculars slung over one shoulder in a leather case on a strap. He got away before I could notice what kind of shoes he wore, and I was so busy taking notes on him that I missed out on his companion entirely.

They came into the hotel lobby like movie stars, enjoying the stir they caused and keeping their eyes blank and cold and their chins haughtily raised. They were really beautiful and I was glad

to have seen two really authentic specimens of the breed. I do not know and could not find out exactly what a Teddy Boy is. Some people told me that Teddy Boys are just ordinary youths who work for a living but who adopt Teddyism as a fad and spend all their wages on fancy clothes of Edwardian design. Other people told me that Teddy Boys are sons of wealthy families who have vowed to bring back the good old days of the landed gentry and who are dressing the part. Whether the Teddy Boys are homosexual causes great difference of opinion, too.

"Only a form of County snobbery," said one Dubliner.

Another turned the corners of his mouth down in a sneer. Being Irish, and extremely conservative, he was not going to enter any discussion so lacking in propriety. He merely left me to draw my own conclusions. But I didn't draw any. I didn't know what to draw.

Although the Dubliner at leisure has drama and gaiety in his costume, the workingman has none; and this is in great contrast to the American worker. Manual laborers in Dublin, indeed, all over Ireland, have no special working clothes; they wear their "good" or "church" clothes grown shabby. They replace from the top. There are no Levis or blue jeans, no colorful work shirts and brilliant neckerchiefs. No perky work caps. Even work gangs on the roads wear shabby and faded two-piece suits and cloth caps of ancient date mashed and worn with age.

Somehow the American manages to get into his working costume the fact that to him work is not all. He intimates by adopting a separate costume for work the fact that the other part of his life is the real part—outside working hours. By his millinery alone the American working man proclaims his freedom from subjugation. There's no counting the number and kinds of hats the American workingman wears. He takes one of his old felt hats and cuts off the brim; he decorates the crown of the hat with colored buttons or badges and wears it like a jester's crown. Another takes the same kind of an old hat, cuts the brim narrow, makes a

design of serrated points around the edge of the brim, turns the brim up and has another laugh provoker. An ordinary visored cap is worn backwards with the visor projecting down over the nape of the neck, or worn with the visor turned sharply upward, giving an air of constant surprise. They wear bright-colored hunting caps to work; they take white canvas hats made for painters and plasterers and remold them nearer to the heart's desire.

Working clothes in America are cheap, colorful and durable. Wearing them makes a man one of a cheerful army of laborers who are not only worthy of their hire; they're giving the effect of having fun while they're being worthy. In Ireland all the workers seem subdued and lonely. They all seem to be as glum as their outworn "good" clothes.

The Crock of Gold

The Crock of Gold, which was on my agenda for the following day, was not unknown to me, so far as its products go. Their materials are on sale in Lord and Taylor in New York, and I remembered having examined the cobweb-like lengths of handwoven tissue wools before I ever had any idea of visiting Ireland. We went down to Blackbrock, where the Crock of Gold is located, on a rainy afternoon. There seemed to be a rather feudal air about the main house and the adjacent buildings, although it would be difficult for me to explain why I thought so.

The door was opened to me by a tall, solemn girl in maid's uniform who ushered me through a handsome hall to a low-ceilinged drawing doom, where I waited for Mr. Farrell, manager and (with his wife) owner of the Crock of Gold enterprise.

Mr. Michael Farrell came in soon—a stocky man in a gingery tweed suit, his pepper-and-salt hair worn long, his eyes dark and burning. He used a cane to walk with; later I heard that he was in ill health, but that afternoon he gave little indication of it. There was an electric heater glowing on the hearth; the walls of the room were covered with paintings; cabinets held lovely bits of porcelain and glass. The whole atmosphere of the room was one of long-

established luxury and relaxation. Mr. Farrell indicated a chair for me, seated himself opposite and shot his direct gaze at me.

"Going to write a book on Ireland," he said. It was not a question. "What kind of book?" and he waited.

Now this is a question I have always found difficult to answer intelligently. What do people expect me to say? A *bad* book? A fat book? Or what? Now, pinned down by the poniard glance of Mr. Michael Farrell's eye, I was more than ever flustered.

"Oh, I dunno," I murmured. "Just a book." I didn't dare to tell him that since my trip to Ireland was only going to be a skimming flight through the south and west, I could scarcely write anything but a kind of skimming book.

There was a bald silence.

"Politics and religion, no doubt," said Mr. Farrell at last, icily.

"Certainly," I answered," since I know little about either."

Mr. Farrell described a wide arc on the floor with the tip of his cane.

"That's what we expect of traveling Americans," he said. "And the less time you spend here, the more profound your observations."

"For one thing, I thought I might write a few paragraphs about the Crock of Gold," I said meekly.

Mr. Farrell made another impatient gesture with the cane.

"It's all written down for you somewhere on a bit of paper," he said. "I'll give it to you later. Will you have something to drink?"

I said I would. By this time I needed it. Mr. Farrell got some Irish whisky for me and something for himself and settled down again to conversation.

"This chair," he said, striking the arm of the chair he was sitting in a soft blow with the heel of his hand, "this chair is a wedding present from W. B. Yeats. And that painting is by his brother Jack Yeats, in his early years." I went to look more closely at the painting and thought how different the work of the young artist

was from the work of the old man. This was a strange, dreamy picture and it caught at the imagination like a sad but inarticulate poem. Just the day before, at the Harrington Gallery, I had seen a very recent painting by this same Jack Yeats. A slashing, almost a mad picture, surely an angry one. It was Yeats in the fury of old age; perhaps the fury stemmed from being old and too wise. The contrast between the two pictures, this on the wall of Mr. Farrell's drawing room and the other on the wall of the art gallery, was almost comical. One all dreamy hope; the other all bitter despair.

I examined some of the other paintings and then I returned to the hearthside and Mr. Farrell, who was waiting.

"And where have you been since you landed here?" asked my host, with the air of a man who knew very well that he'd hear nothing but lies. Still, I had nothing to hide; my life, since coming to Ireland, was an open book. I decided to throw myself on Michael Farrell's mercy and come clean.

"Oh, I've been around," I said. "Killarney and Galway, Connemara and Limerick, to name a few places."

"Limerick," he said. "The City of the Broken Treaty. Did you ever hear the story of the Battle of Limerick?"

Whatever I had heard, it was certainly nothing like what Mr. Farrell would tell me, so I just looked blank.

Mr. Farrell grasped his cane and drew the battle lines on the rug. "You know, of course, how William of Orange got James II off the English throne and how he tried to capture and ruin the city of Limerick. Now the English were *here* and the Irish were *here*, and . . ." Mr. Farrell spoke as though this battle of 1691 had happened yesterday afternoon while he, Michael Farrell, had been watching. "Well, the battle was bloody and the siege was long but the worse of it was the kind of Flight of the Wild Geese all over again. It took place as soon as the Treaty was signed. The Irish soldiers were given three choices they could go to their homes—the Irish army was to be no more; they could join the English

army; or they could join the army of Louis XIV and go to France. A ship was waiting to take them," said Mr. Farrell, "waiting to take whatever volunteers were for France.

"Now here was the Bridge," said this storyteller, and he drew a line on the rug with the tip of his cane. "Here in deep water was the waiting ship"—another line on the rug—"and here, along the shore, were small boats drawn up and waiting to take the men to the larger vessel.

"The platoons came marching to the bridge," Mr. Farrell told me, he made a kind of tapping noise with his cane. "Then, when they had crossed the bridge, those who were for England or their homes turned right and those who were for France turned left." He swept his cane to the right and to the left. "Over and over again, the turn was to the left," said Michael Farrell, "and the men went down to the small boats that were waiting and got in and they were rowed away. It was a terrible thing, a terrible sight; for the women knew that the men would never come back again, never be seen again. Wild with the grief of the parting, wild with pain and despair, the women and girls waded out into the cold water, clutching at the sides of the little boats, weeping and screaming and begging to be taken along. They waded beside the boats as the water got deeper and deeper, screaming with the bitterness and the distress. When they could no longer touch bottom and walk, they floated, still clinging to the sides of the boats. And those aboard the boats pried loose those clinging hands and the women sank with sighs and shrieks and drowned in plain sight of those who were abandoning them!"

The taste of salt tears was bitter on my lips and cold depths of seaweedy water caught at my body and made me shudder and shake. My hair, sodden with mixed tears and mud, hung dank upon my shoulders and weighed me down. Somebody was beating at my hands that were trying so vainly to hold back the boat; the face of the man I loved was sharp with shame and stony with determination. My feet could no longer feel the mud of the bot-

tom. I floated for only a moment, but my fingers could no longer bear the pain of being hammered at by some implement wielded by brutal force. I had to let go—the water pulled at me; I gave a dying yelp. Mr. Farrell's ember eyes bored into mine.

I wiped my nose on the back of one hand and took a quavering gulp of Irish whisky.

"So you can see for yourself how it was," Mr. Farrell was saying.

Brother. I certainly could.

Mr. Farrell, leaning upon his cane, stared into the fireplace. It was plain that he was still good and sore about the flight of the Irish soldiers after the Battle of Limerick in 1691, and I didn't know that I could really blame him. However, I had come to find out about the community project called the Crock of Gold and time, as they say at home, was awasting. To save my life, however, I dared not ask about the Crock of Gold. Somehow it seemed that the conversation should be kept on a rather more cultural level.

I made a wild effort to introduce some such topic, only to regret my choice almost at once.

"Do you think Sean O'Casey should come home to Ireland?" I asked, trying to look intelligent. "I've asked a few Dublin people that question and most of them tell me that he would be welcomed with open arms."

"Sean O'Casey," said Mr. Farrell in a tiger tone. "He left Ireland in a huff nearly twenty years ago and he's still in a huff as far as I can make out. A twenty-year-old huff is a long huff! 'Welcomed with open arms'! That's all my eye and Betty Martin! He left because certain things made him mad. The things that made him mad haven't changed and I don't suppose *he's* changed much, either. Better let things remain the way they are. . . ." Mr. Farrell's look dared me to do anything at all about trying to bring Sean O'Casey back to Dublin.

Then suddenly the morose expression on Mr. Farrell's face lightened a little and he almost smiled.

"Here's a story about him I like. It concerns certain negotiations he and Ria Mooney were having—or trying to have—about the Abbey Theatre's production of O'Casey's *Red Roses for Me.* Miss Mooney would write to O'Casey asking his opinion about certain aspects of the production or asking permission for something or other and O'Casey would send back furious letters not agreeing to anything. Finally, in despair, Ria Mooney went over to England to see O'Casey personally, hoping to come to some agreement after seeing him face to face. Everything about the meeting was dulcet and delightful. No arguments about anything. O'Casey agreed to everything. Consented to everything. Miss Mooney, who had been refused everything by mail, was bewildered and asked O'Casey why it was that he was suddenly so agreeable.

" 'Ah, well,' " O'Casey told her, " 'I'm a writer, and whenever I get a pen in me hand, I get bitther.' "

"Isn't he the best writer you have today?" I asked. "Or are the best writers all writing in Gaelic?"

Mr. Farrell leaped as though he had sat on a hot coal.

"Gaelic!" he cried in a choking voice. "What great Irishman ever wrote in Gaelic?"

"Wolfe Tone?" I murmured.

It seemed as though Mr. Farrell would really have to kill me.

"He wrote in English," he said in a dead cold voice. Then, caught up by another angle of the thought, he said, sighing, "I find myself retreating from Tone's ideas. I'm getting conservative as I grow older."

"You're joining the majority, then," I said bravely. "It seems to me that the majority of Irish people are deeply conservative."

Mr. Farrell gave me another one of his deep, fiery looks.

"Ireland's the only country today where the children respect the parents and the servants respect their masters. Parents are supreme and the mother, particularly, is feared and loved. Take the

young girls who work here; if they spoil a bit of work, they say, 'Take it out of me wages but don't tell me mother.' Things are very different, here in Ireland. A man can be bone poor and be highly thought of if he's a scholar or has any pretensions at all to being a gentleman. The middle-class people and the working class hold learning in respect. Ireland's god is *not* money, it's the brain; the mind!"

The implication was plain here that Mr. Farrell well knew that the god of America *is* money and that scholarship and "being a gentleman" are far down the scale. I reached into my seething mind for a few choice phrases to adjust Mr. F.'s ideas about America. First, I wanted to say, "The less an Irishman knows about America, the more profound his convictions about it and the sharper and more brutal his criticisms." I longed to say, not too gently, either, that in America today there is no such word as "servant," and darned few domestic workers, either—we have almost arrived at a "servantless society." Another thing sure: what few servants remain do not have "masters." And what Mr. Farrell meant by "being a gentleman," would not be understood in America at all.

However, I realized that nothing I could say and little I could think would make any impression. Mr. Farrell's ideas about America were fixed and set. That his ideas were very far wide of the truth was a pity, but there was no mending that. I kept quiet.

From out the dim past came to me the memory of a lesson in manners once given me by my mother.

"You must never be rude to anybody when you're a guest in his house," my mother told me.

"But you said I must never be rude to anybody who is a guest in *our* house," I objected.

"That's right," said my mother.

"But when *am* I going to be rude, then?" I cried, frustrated.

My mother sighed. "That's the devil of it," she said.

The old lesson swam to the surface of my mind and I heeded

the old admonition. All I could hope for was that some day I'd get Mr. Farrell in the house of a mutual friend, and then I could really let him have it with both barrels.

Michael Farrell, oblivious to the stew of anger in me, was going along with his conversation.

"What impressions have you of Ireland so far?" he asked, "or have you any at all?"

"I'd hardly call them impressions," I said, "they're more like dents."

My host did not turn a hair, nor smile, either. I could see that he was having recurring doubts as to my sanity and grave misgivings of my fitness to visit Ireland at all. I felt that I had to make some effort to repay his letting me come to the Crock of Gold, so I told him the story of my visit to the little rural school on the "lonesomest road in Ireland." His tenseness seemed to loosen a trifle and the glare of his eyes softened to a kinder glow.

The electric heater and two glasses of Irish whisky had made a difference in the temperature of the room and of me. I cautiously removed a sweater or two and Mr. Farrel slipped off his coat.

"Now about the Crock of Gold," I said.

Mr. Farrel reached over to a table and picked up a piece of paper which he gave me. On it was typed a short history of the enterprise known as the Crock of Gold.

"M-m-yes. The Crock of Gold," said Mr. Farrell. "Now, you see the workers here are local people. Many of them have been with us for years. Paddy Dunne, the head weaver, for instance, you'll meet him later. The girls work in a kind of rotation: one week in the factory"—he didn't say "factory," I don't remember what he called it—"then one week here in the household. The girl who let you in is working in the apron and cap this week. Others do washing and ironing and many household tasks. We believe that service should move smoothly from one part of the community to another. The workers get an annual share in the profits as well as their regular wages. The girls are glad to be

trained for the management of their own homes as well as the training they get in the workrooms. They're patient and eager. . . . Oh, the patience of the Irishwoman! Many Irishwomen have nothing to face but life with a drunken husband! They've no hope for anything else. Training here will give them a kind of life of their own. . . . The women of Ireland! Ireland is a matriarchy. The mother is all-powerful and the children hold her in fear and love." Mr. Farrell was about to pour me another drink, but I gave him a firm and definite American refusal.

"How about the weaving?" I asked. "Can I see that?"

Mr. Farrell slipped into his tweed coat and I put back my envelopment of sweaters and he led the way out of the warm, cozy room. We passed through a big old-fashioned kitchen where a lovely dark girl was ironing—and if the reader gets tired of my saying that the Irish girls are lovely, all I can say is, they *are* lovely and that's all there is to it. This dark-haired beauty was another of the communal workers having her day at domestic service.

I was now ushered into a courtyard cobbled with old, round stones. Across this court was a long, low shed and Mr. Farrell, the rain spangling his regal head, preceded me up an open stairway that led to the second story of this building. Halfway up the stairs, he stopped and pointed across to a glass panel in a door of the main house.

"The glass in that door," he said, entirely oblivious to the pouring rain, "is bottle glass. Old bottle glass, the kind they used in bottles in days gone by."

The grunt I gave was intended to represent delight at this bit of information. To tell the truth, my eyes were nearly blinded by falling rain and all I could think of was getting into shelter. We toiled up the rest of the stairs and Mr. Farrell opened a door and we went into the Crock of Gold workroom. Here sat some of the Crock of Gold workers and here was Mrs. Farrell.

As we entered the workroom there had been a sound of singing;

a high, reedy sound, like nothing I had ever heard. When the girls, who were the singers as well as the workers, caught sight of a stranger, the sound of singing stopped as suddenly as though every throat in the room had been cut. The eyes of the girls, as wary and bright as birds' eyes, watched me impersonally and closely. If there was any expression at all in those eyes, it was the expression of distrust.

There were a dozen or more of these young girls seated at long tables down the narrow, window-lined room. They were examiners and winders of woolen yarn and preparers of tickets. The examiners look over the finished cloth for flaws in the weaving; the winders, using little gadgets like pencil sharpeners, wind the yarn on big spools for use on the looms; and the ticket girls paste little tickets on the materials or the samples. They never get to be weavers, because weaving on a hand loom is very heavy work and must be done by men.

The work went on without ceasing, but silently, now. Mr. Farrell introduced me to his wife.

She stood at one end of the room behind a high, narrow counter. On this counter were several bolts of material, and many other rolls of cloth were on shelves behind her. She is a small woman, rather beautiful, and giving somehow the impression of fragility. She has white hair, and, during working hours, at least, has no nonsense about her whatsoever. I felt that this was a woman who knew what she was about. Who would resent intrusion, but who would put up with it, if she had to. She would tell you anything you wanted to know about the Crock of Gold, but she would exact, as price for such information, prompt departure.

The lady who is now Mrs. Farrell was born in Sligo. The family were artists and writers, and as Mr. Farrell remarked, "ladies of fashion." With this background of culture and easy familiarity with the arts, it was natural that this lady should become interested in the traditional crafts of the cotters in the neighborhood. The cultural and the traditional ultimately fused and became the absorb-

ing interest of her life. A career of design and handcraft has engrossed her since youth.

Her formal education over, she went to England to study weaving with a family famous for that work, the Bakers. After studying with them, she went for further instruction to Austria, France and Switzerland. Gradually she attained a reputation, not only for exquisite workmanship, but for imagination and originality of design and manipulation of color. Her work was accepted for display in Swiss galleries and she was offered and accepted the post of chief instructor at Cours Institute.

But another idea was beckoning. She had a plan for the establishment of a community of Irish weavers. Returning to the old ways of the cotters and using the old methods for dyeing and weaving, she would contribute her own designs. She returned to Ireland and in 1919 she was able to found the Crock of Gold. It was not long before the Crock of Gold materials were recognized for what they were—an entirely new departure in Irish craftsmanship. Mr. Farrell, a well-known drama critic and journalist, had been accumulated somewhere along the way. And now he joined the Crock of Gold as manager, where he remains to this day.

The Crock of Gold was named after the book by James Stephens, which tells the old legend of the crock of gold hidden at the end of the rainbow.

Mrs. Farrell gave me her attention and was perfectly courteous. Yet she seemed to be hoping for the sound of my feet going down the outside stairs. She is a busy woman and a concentrated one and the appearance of wandering American writers, and females at that, must be highly distracting and disconcerting.

I made up my mind to be quick about my investigations, but I could hardly get started for staring at Mrs. Farrell's costume. Crock of Gold materials, of course, and you should have seen that blouse! Tissue wool in a foggy pink and blue plaid, it could

have been eaten without cream. Her skirt was a loose-woven gray, perfectly plain, but most unusual.

"Is there any particular material you would like to see?" Mrs. Farrell asked, and as a matter of fact, there was. I wanted to see what plain black handwoven material would look like. It looked like a nice, soft, black cloud. Mrs. Farrell put a bolt of this stuff on the counter for me to paw. It was heaven-soft and spider-web light. Perfect for scarves, but beyond description for blouses or —if you want to go hog wild—for suits.

After looking over several other lengths of material, I was taken back downstairs to the lower floor, where the looms are set. The instant the workroom door closed after me, I heard the eerie song of the work-girls. They seemed to take up the air on the exact note and at the exact phrase of the song where they had stopped when I came into the room. I was sorry that they had not felt like singing when I was with them. I wanted very much to hear their music.

Mrs. Farrell took me into the rooms where the looms were— five or six, I think, I have forgotten the exact number. She introduced me to Paddy Dunne, their long-time employee and now head workman. Paddy Dunne is small, pale and direct. Born in County Meath, he has been a weaver all his working life. From early youth in a small mill in Meath he went to Dublin when things got slow in the smaller place. After a short time in Dublin, he came to the Crock of Gold, where he has been since. Thirty-four years a weaver. He looks so slender that one would think even a light broom might tax his strength. But weaving is a man's trade and takes muscle of arm, leg and back. Paddy Dunne, like Longfellow's well-known smith, must have arms like iron bands.

A man sits at a loom and works with both hands and both feet for long hours every day. The great shuttle, of heavy wood, is longer and bigger around than a milk bottle and must be passed back and forth through the threads on the loom faster than the eye can follow. While this is going on, both feet must be

used to press down on levers as though the weaver were playing an organ. Although the shuttle goes like lightening, the eye of the weaver must be faster, so that no mistake in the pattern occurs. Hand weaving requires strong arms and legs, a strong back, quick eyes, a good memory and endurance. Thirty-four years at the loom makes something more than hundreds of yards of material. It makes a man.

Setting up the work on a loom is a very complicated process, especially when the pattern is unique, as are most of the Crock of Gold designs. A young girl who was being taught the specialized process of setting up a pattern had a look of glazed concentration and never raised her eyes when we paused beside her. She held the tip of her tongue clamped in her teeth and her soul was in the colored threads that were stretched like colored harp strings on the big loom.

"You've got to have the patience for it and the feeling for it," Paddy Dunne told me—meaning weaving. "In a plaid pattern, now, the stitches must be counted and then the color must be changed. It's no trade for a fool. A good weaver can turn out about one hundred yards of handwoven material a week, if the cloth is plain; if it is patterned, naturally he can make somewhat less."

By Paddy Dunne's nervous tension and manner, I judge that the dyeing is the most exacting and exasperating part of the whole process.

"We dye twenty pounds of wool at a time," he said, "and we use a mixture of French, English and local wools. It's a messy business, dyeing is, and a nervous one, too. It's never sure that you'll get the exact color you want, no matter how careful you are about records and all. It's a risky part of the work and dirty, too."

The dyes used are mostly vegetable dyes, but sometimes analine dyes are used.

Mrs. Farrell now took me back to the house, and I had my mouth open to say good-by to her and to thank her for taking

time to bother with me, when I realized that she had disappeared. But Mr. Farrell came in just at that moment, looking really weary. I realized that I had been quite a long time on Farrell property and I belatedly started to make tracks out of there.

But Mr. Farrell, although obviously very tired, was smiling! As we walked together toward the front door he took my arm, and he said almost gaily, "You see, I'm a bit cagey! We never can tell who's coming here, so I probe a bit to find out if there's any intelligence. No knowing who we'll meet!"

I said ungraciously, "That goes both ways!" *I* was tired, too.

But my rudeness seemed only to delight Mr. Farrell, who thereupon fetched me a friendly dig in the ribs with his elbow. I was unable to think of any way to reply to this gesture, except to dig Mr. Farrell in *his* ribs with *my* elbow. This was evidently the correct social procedure, for Mr. Farrell burst into laughter, and by the time we got to the car we were downright merry.

Sean O'Brien started the car and we drove away, as Mr. Farrell waved farewell.

"Come back and see us again," he called, "come back and have a meal with us and bring your husband. I know his work."

"Well, thank you very much," I said, baffled by his reversal of mood. Perhaps, though, the explanation was simple. Maybe he was just so glad to see the last of me that he got light-headed.

Come to think of it, though, we had spent a very enjoyable afternoon together and he had filled my glass two and a half times with Irish whisky.

Wasn't he the terrible man?

Bloodstock

While I was being the prima ballerina in this Dublin rigadoon, Miss Witlov was discovering a Dublin of her own. She did not feel up to accompanying me on my daily rounds. She had a leisurely breakfast, and when the day was fine, she would patter around and investigate the shops, or sit in the park at St. Stephen's Green admiring the spring display of tulips and watching the other park sitters and tulip observers. She went to the hairdressers; she inspected churches. She investigated restaurants. She found Jammet's.

Jammet's, on *Nassau* Street, proved to be one of the finest restaurants we had ever patronized. It was the equal of any of the best restaurants in New York, Paris or London. It became our favorite, although just for fun we went to as many others as we had time for. Others that we liked were the Shelbourne, the Gresham and Russel's. Each has an atmosphere that is quite individual and all can be depended upon to produce an excellent meal. But Jammet's was the prize on our list.

When the time came for me to visit Tulyar, the great and famous Irish horse, I urged Miss Witlov to go with me. But Miss

Witlov said, "Oh, dear, no." She had plans of her own. My first date with Tulyar had to be postponed for some reason, and when Mrs. Peterson, my C.T.T. companion for the day, called for me on the morning indicated, she broke the news to me as gently as possible.

"Visitors make Tulyar nervous," Mrs. Peterson said.

"Well, probably Tulyar would make *me* nervous," I said, rather nettled at having been given a stand-up by a horse. "But you don't hear *me* complaining."

"We made other arrangements for you to visit a bloodstock farm," said Mrs. Peterson. But if she was expecting me to give a cry of joy, she was disappointed. In the first place, I consider the word "bloodstock" unfortunate And I wasn't any too sure what it meant, either. When the C.T.T. people first began to talk about "bloodstock," I thought they meant a blood bank and I had visions of great big bottles of blood on shelves. Why I should have to visit such a place I did not know. Also, I had a sneaking suspicion that before I got out of there I'd be tapped for a pint to be donated to Irish hospitals.

But as the conversation about "bloodstock" continued, I felt that there was some misunderstanding somewhere. I looked up the word in the dictionary and found: "bloodstock: Thoroughbred horses, particularly race horses." Not a blood bank at all. This was some relief to me, but not much.

Horse racing is a very ancient sport in Ireland and has an age-old tradition. In many of the Irish legends, racing is mentioned; it is even represented as one of the main delights of heaven by some of the earliest storytellers.

The first steeplechase was run about two hundred years ago; the course was cross country, between the towns of Buttevant and Doneraile in County Cork. Horses and riders rode helter-skelter, jumping or avoiding fences, walls, gates, brooks and other obstacles. Since they kept the steeple of the church at Doneraile in

sight as a landmark to guide them, the new sport—and a very rough one it proved to be—was called steeplechasing.

Irish-bred steeplechasers have always dominated the sport in England. Nearly all the most famous Grand National winners have been Irish; of the fifty-one Grand National races run since the beginning of this century, thirty-five have been won by Irish horses.

Perhaps the main reason that Irish horses are winners in this difficult form of sport is due to the way Irish horses are coddled and cosseted during their early years. European horses are raced as early as possible and as a result can race only two or three seasons before having to be retired to stud. Irish horses, although usually ridden on the hunting field when young, are never under any great strain. The canny Irish trainers watch the development of a young horse with extreme care, with the result that Irish horses enter steeplechasing much older than European horses and many Irish horses reach their peak performances when nine or ten years old; many run good races at the ages of thirteen or fourteen.

It is not only in the field of steeplechasing that the superiority of the Irish horse shows up. It is equally true of racing in general. The most consistent and outstanding winners of sprints, middle-distance events and "stayers" are Irish horses.

Thoroughbred horses seem to thrive in Ireland. Much of this may be attributed to Irish "know-how" about horses. But aside from that, many people feel that soil and climate are very important in producing top-quality horses. Irish grass supplies the finest feed in the world; it is grass that grows on limestone soil, under the mild Irish sun and the plentiful Irish rain. The rain that is a nuisance to other outdoor sports and to tourists brings blessings on the heads of Irish horse breeders.

It is generally conceded that Ireland leads the rest of the world in the rearing of horses. It has always been one of the chief interests of Ireland, but since the 1890's horse breeding—bloodstock—has become pre-eminent.

It was in the 1890's that Colonel Hall-Walker, who later became Lord Wavertree, decided to establish the best stud farm the world had ever seen. He traveled everywhere in search of what he considered perfect conditions for the raising of race horses, and finally settled on a thousand acres of grassland in Tully, County Kildare, Ireland. In a few years, under his supervision, Tully had become one of the most important studs in Europe. For some reason, Colonel Walker later transferred the farm to the British government. It was then called the English National Stud. Later it was transferred to the Irish government and is now known as the Irish National Stud.

When the Aga Khan decided to go in for horse breeding, he too chose Ireland for his farm. Sheshoon, as this farm is called, lies within a short distance of Tully. Altogether, the Aga Khan has five studs in Ireland and some of his Irish horses have won big races. Good old Tulyar was bred in one of the Aga Kahn's farms. I think our own Nashua, the $1,250,000 darling of American racing, is of Irish descent.

There are hundreds of stud farms in Ireland, varying from large establishments with several stallions and stalls for hundreds of mares to small studs which have only a few.

It was to one of these smaller farms that I was taken by Mrs. Peterson to get an idea of what real Irish horses look like and to get a glimpse of a world unknown to me—the bloodstock world.

The bloodstock farm chosen for me was the Balreask Stud, at Navan, County Meath, not far outside of Dublin. It is owned by Mrs. May Clarke and has more big, shiny horses than you could shake a stick at. Only I don't think they'd let you shake a stick at them. They're pretty fussy.

Around three sides of a big dirt court are long, low sheds, with Dutch doors all along the walls. When we drove into this court, all the upper parts of the doors were open, and from each open door protruded a horse's head. Eyes bulged, ears flickered and twitched, and there were more whinnies and neighs and hoof

poundings than I had ever heard in my whole life before. Such a racket. And it seemed to get louder, once I was out of the car and within biting distance of those big mouths.

"Looking for their dinners," explained a groom.

"Well, give it to them," I said hastily. "Anything to stop that rumpus."

But evidently the Clarke farm does not believe in demand feedings, because the groom just went on showing me the sights and ignoring the squeals and banging. This groom is a tall, solemn, cadaverous man, thirty years or more in the Clarke employ. He kept up a humming monotone to the horses and they accepted him loftily, listening to him with regal contempt. Nevertheless, you could tell that they got comfort from having him around and were glad to know that he stood between them and the world.

Several fat brindle cats prowled the courtyard, passing from one Dutch door to another, crouching close to the ground and peeking between the doorsills and the doors. I don't know what they were doing, unless it was choosing the most comfortable stall to spend the night.

At first I was given a quick run-past of the mares, just a look at their staring faces as we passed the half-open stalls. I was being guided to the stalls of the stallions, located at the far end of the court. I didn't know a stallion from a scallion when I first arrived at the Clarke farm, but I soon learned the difference, I assure you. The groom quietly opened the door of a shed at the end of the quadrangle and stepped like velvet into the gloom of a stall. When he came out, he was leading—the most. Absolutely the most horse. It was Golden Cloud, King of the Balreask Stud.

The groom held this czar on a close rein, right up against the nose. The hope was to check any head tossing; eye rolling could not be controlled. The groom murmured soft words to the Cloud, and although I couldn't hear exactly what was said, most of it being in a mixture of Gaelic and horse language, doubtless the groom was saying, "Sure, sure, now, it's all right. The stupid old

bag doesn't know one end of a horse from the other, but she's company and so we're expected to show off to her, do you see? Step out now and let the old thing see what a real horse looks like. It'll only take a minute and then she can go back where she came from and tell everybody she's seen Golden Cloud. Sure, darlin', sure, she's a fool and a fool's daughter, but I'll take you back now and there'll be a little something extra in it for you, since you've been such a lovely creature."

So was Golden Cloud paraded before me. Golden Cloud they call him and he is well named. He has a golden sheen and his prancing hooves but delicately touch the ground. He is a golden cloud and does not need the earth to walk on. He was so arrogantly aware of his beauty that if I had not been afraid of him I would have laughed aloud at his unabashed self-esteem. As he passed me, scarcely an arm's length away, he rolled his fiery eyes at me and lifted one silken lip, showing his pink gums and reaching teeth in a horrible, horse-sized sneer.

Somebody standing near me, seeing my admiration for this thirteen-year-old king of the farm, said deprecatingly, "Wait till you've seen Luminary. He's much more beautiful."

At this remark Golden Cloud put out a long, pink tongue and spattered the landscape around with a spray from his nostrils. He switched his hindquarters toward the speaker, who made an agile movement to a safer distance.

"Nothing could be more beautiful than Golden Cloud," I said in a servile tone, hoping to placate his vanity but meaning every word of it, too.

But the damage had been done and Golden Cloud wanted no more of us. The groom, quick to understand the change of mood, conducted the insulted stallion back to the privacy of his quarters and shut him in. He probably began to brood over the crassness of visiting humans. I longed to assure him that the person who had made the disparaging remark was *not* an American. But I probably got the blame, anyhow.

Then they showed Luminary. "*Lumin*'ry," they pronounced it. He is a magnificent chestnut, but Golden Cloud had skimmed the cream of the excitement for me. There was a very amusing contrast between the manners of the two horses. Golden Cloud, although the elder by several years, seems to be more sprightly in spirit than his confrere. Luminary seems to have a serene superiority. He seems to be sure of his rank as crown prince and pretender to the throne and he sees no reason to be nervous about it. He walked like a Nijinski—graceful, full of power, regal. Although Luminary's a newcomer to the stud of Balreask, already his children have won races. He has the attitude of a horse who hasn't a thing to worry about, and I guess he's right.

Each stallion receives one dozen raw eggs a day and loves them. The horses also get flaxseed, corn and first-crop hay, all organically grown. They are fed whatever amount they seem to wish to eat, and salesmen who come to Balreask trying to sell horse vitamins are given the boot out of there. The horses get the best natural food, and believe me, they look it.

They are housed in roomy stalls kept scrupulously clean. They are groomed until they gleam and they are ministered to by attendants who patently adore them.

For all this attention and luxury, Golden Cloud and Luminary are expected to return certain favors which, when you come to consider, may not be entirely distasteful, but may, just possibly, become slightly tiresome. As good, reliable and very valuable stud stallions, each is expected to perform stud service, sometimes twice a day, during the season. The season lasts from early February to the middle of June. Although Mrs. Clarke has lists "as long as your arm" of requests for "introductions," the stallions are restricted to forty mares each per season. "After all," she told me, "the horse is *not* a machine."

During the rest of the year, when the season is past, the stallions eat eggs and munch flaxseed and probably dream of past delights and future conquests.

The Balreask Stud seems to me to be nature's answer to the spurious theory of monogamy, which women probably thought up. It's an excellent idea and personally I'm all in favor of monogamy, but after visiting the Balreask Farm, I really wonder how it is that we've been able to put it over so long.

Horse owners bring their mares from far and near to meet the Balreask stallions. But don't suppose that just any old mare whose owner has the stud fee can be introduced to Golden Cloud or Luminary. A mare's family tree for several generations must be submitted to Mrs. Clarke—sometimes as many as seven generations back, if horses have generations. Before accepting a mare for service, Mrs. Clarke considers many factors. Much more than the stud fee is involved, although that is no small consideration. Mrs. Clarke wants her stallions' offspring to reflect glory on Balreask; she wants only the finest performances on her farm's record.

A mare's conformation must be closely studied. Also, do the "blood lines" of the mare and the stallion "knit"? Too much inbreeding is not to be thought of. A small mare is not introduced to a small horse, and a big mare with a big horse is no good, either. The best mating is for a big stallion with a medium-sized mare which has a roomy body and short legs. . . . So watch your step.

When asked her opinion of what constitutes a perfect stud horse, Mrs. Clarke said, "A one-mile horse that has won in good, fast company over a mile and a quarter is perfect. Mated with a mare of 'staying blood,' this should produce something good that will win over the mile."

The service fee for Golden Cloud is £250 and for Luminary £150, and only if Mrs. Clarke thinks the debutante mare is suitable for the social occasion.

I have been told by reliable sources that if you want to succeed in Ireland in business, art, science or religion, you have to own a good horse, a horse that has a successful record that people can recognize and respect. Horse breeders, horse owners, jockeys are

heroes in Ireland. The glamour that we Americans attach to the entertainment world, the theatre, the movies, television and radio radiates, in Ireland, from the world of the horse. There is no use my saying I don't believe this; I just have to say I certainly don't understand it. Where would a scientist stable a horse, for instance, in his laboratory? And an Irish poet—how he could afford to keep a horse? It's all a muddle to me. But it's certainly no muddle at all to the Irish.

After being shown the two Balreask stallions, I was taken back to see the mares. Whether the feeding time was past, or whether the doors had been closed to heighten the dramatic effect, I do not know. At any rate, where there had been rows of nodding horse heads now there were only blank walls. The groom went to the first door and threw it open. And it was brought painfully to my attention that my vocabulary not only suffered from lack of variety of adjectives, but any intelligent words to say about mares seemed lacking, too. It was easy to peer into the first stall at the mare and her foal and say, "Oh, how sweet!" There in the deep twilight of the small compartment stood a trembling mare with her little one; both quivering and fearful, both staring wide-eyed at the intruders. The baby horse had legs like pipe cleaners; it looked at me for one frozen instant and then squinched itself between its mother and the back wall, leaving only its frail hindquarters and its thin little tail visible. The mother stood, head high, nostrils and eyes wide, but quieted to the familiar voice of the groom.

"How sweet!" I said. From the titters of the others who were with me, I realized that "sweet" was not a horse word, and I was more than ever a fool among these horsy people.

Well, the doors of the stalls were opened one after another. Of course I did not see a hundred mares and a hundred foals, but it seemed that many. The mares—fine, sturdy animals—are heavy and lumpy compared to the brilliant and streamlined sires. But the foals have the babyishness so charming in any young animal. It

is a matter for wonder how anything so frail and helpless can grow so soon into a big, strong, tough beast.

Each time a groom opened a door, I peeked into the stall and groped around in my aching mouth for the appropriate adjective. "Darling!" I said, and, "Cute!" I said and, "Oh, how—cute!" I said. The mares stared at me angrily and the foals shook like aspens. It was an engaging sight and a very pleasant experience, but I was mare-drunk and foal-dizzy before very long.

Finally we came to a stall where the mare bravely stood her ground, but the little foal was even braver. Shakily but earnestly, it left the lee of its mother and wobbled over to the open door. It tilted its frail nose at me and sniffed—or seemed to sniff. Then, with a comical flirt of its heels, it fled away to the shadows and safety.

"Oh, that's the one I like," I cried, "that's the one I like best!"

Well wouldn't you have thought that everybody would agree? Wouldn't you think I'd said something reasonable and logical? Well, nothing of the kind. I had chosen the "worst so far as breeding goes," they told me. I sulked.

Bad breeding, hey? When a nice little horse, without a word of command from anybody, even its mother, walks timidly out of the safety of the stall to greet a stranger with a sweet little bow and an amusing little bit of by-play, that's bad breeding? It's the *best*, if you ask me, and all I can add is, they'd better watch that little horse. They've got a winner there, and the future will bear me out. Any horse with such instinctive good manners is dead sure to sweep up all the races it's ever entered in and you mark my words.

The mares do not all belong to Mrs. Clarke. Besides being a stud farm, Balreask is a kind of lying-in hospital for pregnant mares. No Irish mare of any standing at all is expected to go and have her foal behind a woodpile (peat pile) like a tinker's donkey. Irish mares have attention and care, the most scientific and up to date that can be secured. And it's because of the horses that the

peasant and the workingclass Irishwoman have finally been able to get just as good lying-in attention as mares. The Sweepstakes with their percentage contributions to the hospitals have managed all that, and it just goes to show how nature and mankind, working together, can bring about a better standard of human life.

"There are bigger studs, with fountains and flower beds and all kinds of frills," Mrs. Clarke said, "but there's no place where the care is better, nor the place cleaner, nor the food finer than at Balreask. It's not the biggest, and it's not the most spectacular, but there's none to beat it."

I was touched by this pride of ownership. It was obvious that she was speaking the simple truth. Balreask Stud looked shipshape and shining; everywhere there was evidence of constant warfare against the grubbiness and muck that must threaten the sanitary conditions of an animal farm. The sheds were sparkling and bright; the stalls showed signs of daily—indeed, almost hourly—attention, with fresh straw everywhere and no unsightly piles of manure. It almost seemed like a great, big, successful and sanitary laboratory. No wonder Mrs. Clarke felt proud.

Mrs. May Clarke had been present during most of my peregrinations about her property. Her manner had been reserved, to say the least, and her glance had been cool and level. I, personally, am as friendly as a puppy, of course, but I began to think that there wasn't a very wide meeting ground for Mrs. May Clarke and me. She is a horsy Irishwoman, very executive and decisive. I am an unhorsy American who rather resents being pushed around. So when Mrs. Clarke, animated by a stern sense of duty and an inescapable sense of Irish hospitality, invited me, with a rather large group of other people, to go to her house for dinner, I accepted with grave misgivings. Everybody piled into cars, choosing partners quickly; that left me for Mrs. Clarke. We climbed glumly into her car together and were off.

I didn't know what to say, so I didn't say anything. But Mrs.

Clarke, who obviously did not want to talk to me, either, made the effort. Realizing that The Horse, as a subject for mutual interest, was hopeless, Mrs. Clarke tried the theatre, and there she struck pay dirt. Rather desperately, I thought, she introduced the name of an English drama critic whose work we both knew. With clear-cut and fearless finality, Mrs. Clarke said that she considered this man poisonous. An atmosphere of genial warmth seeped into the car. There is no quicker way for two people to become friends than to discover a third person they both dislike intensely. There was an immediate meeting of minds between Mrs. May Clarke and me that brought us to her home in a golden glow of mutual admiration.

It was now late afternoon. It would have been cocktail time at home and, by golly, it was cocktail time at the Clarke house. Fires flickered on welcoming hearths, candlelight gleamed on walls lined with paintings and books. The Clarke house is one of those grand old Irish places that time has laid a blessing upon. It has been there a long time and many people have lived under its roof and have brought to it varied personalities and interests. With six or seven congenial people sitting relaxed and happy in the flickering firelight of the beautiful drawing room, the talk began to be about people and books and the theatre. The Horse, which I had expected to be king, had been relegated to his proper place in the paddock or whatever it's called.

I brooded a bit over the irony of life. Here was I, very happy to be a guest in this Irish house, very happy to have the conversation veer away from The Horse to subjects more to my taste. Yet here was I, about to urge Mrs. Clarke to get back on The Horse. That was what I had come for, unfortunately—to lead The Horse back—and Mrs. Clarke soon realized my plight. She quickly made an opportunity for us to withdraw together to her study where we could talk about the Balreask Stud.

"The Balreask Stud is more than two hundred years old," she told me. "They began with hunters and the farm has been in my

husband's family ever since. My husband inherited it. . . . When he and I were married, I didn't know one end of a horse from the other. To tell the truth, I didn't care."

I made a sympathetic noise and Mrs. Clarke smiled.

"Oh, but I knew if my marriage was to be a success I had to find out about horses. I went to race meetings and studied blood lines and conformations far into the night."

"The Clarke family had had this place for two hundred years and I determined to keep it in the family. . . . Well, I kept on. I learned the hard way and I had terrible ups and downs. But I educated all my children. I bought more land, built new stables. Gradually I adopted the latest scientific methods for farming. I grazed Angus cattle, I seeded and manured the grazing land and the corn meadows for the feed for the horses. . . . I never stopped studying and I never stopped learning."

Mrs. Clarke's eyes, which seemed to be looking back through those troubled years, had in them, nevertheless, a light of satisfaction as well as of battle.

"I don't produce Derby winners," she said, "at least not yet; but high-class race horses. It's the best or none, with me. Yearlings from the Balreask farm bring good prices. The top price for a Clarke yearling was at public auction. The animal brought £4000.

"Sometimes a mare I sell will produce something good for somebody else. It's a queer business with many quirks to it. For instance, fashion. You'd hardly think that the cycle of fashion would reach into the horse world, but it definitely does. Some years, for no apparent reason, the word goes around that 'So-and-so's foals are no good.' The next year, 'chestnuts by some stallion are no good.' There's no telling what they'll do or say next, they're like a lot of old women."

"I've been told that you are one of the pre-eminent bloodstock people of Ireland," I said. "It must be very gratifying to have such a reputation after all your sacrifices and effort."

Mrs. Clarke was too honest to deny it. "In a way, you can say

I've been lucky," she said, "but on the other hand I've worked very hard for what I've produced."

The rest of the time I spent in the Clarke home was given over to dinner and general sociability. Nothing could have been pleasanter and I felt that my journey into the world of Irish bloodstock had been eminently successful. Although the Balreask Stud may be, by Irish standards, rather a modest plant, I am assured that it rates second to none in standards and potentialities.

When Tulyar got over his nervous spell and extended me another invitation to come to see him at Tully I sent regrets. I had a lot of other things on my agenda, and if you want to know the truth of the matter, I was of the opinion that if you've seen Golden Cloud and Luminary, you've done all right. I gave Tulyar a miss.

A Day of Rest and a Way of Life

When Miss Witlov and I were in Dublin, the city was decorated within an inch of its life in honor of An Tostal (At Home), Ireland's spring festival, and very pretty it looked, too. All the tall street lights were garlanded with living flowers. The parks and open squares had special displays of tulips and other spring blooms. The hotels and some of the public buildings were draped with bright bunting and it all gave an air of real festivity to the place.

This spring festival has been an annual event for four years now. It is advertised as a nation-wide celebration in which all Ireland participates. But if you have the idea that it is a big, noisy affair, with brass bands blaring and people filling the streets with shouts and song, you are mistaken. It's not at all like the New Orleans Mardi Gras. And it's not quite like the story Sean O'Casey tells about it, either. He says that once, during the first festival, a tourist asked a Dubliner where the festival was. The Dublin man, who had not been aware that there *was* a festival, was nonplused. Not liking to disappoint a visitor, however, he said, "Oh, sure, I think it's just down at the end of the street."

It's a nice, gentle little festival and you can take it or leave it alone. There are sports events and art exhibits, and folk music and dancing. Tickets for these are on sale at all the hotels, and the Irish Transport Company has inaugurated special tours around the country that include many of the An Tostal features. Tours are of six, seven, nine or twelve days and cost less than $10 per day per person. Hotel accommodations, meals and even tips are included in this fee. Traveling this way is really de luxe and the spring of the year is a lovely time to be in Ireland.

It cannot be said that Dubliners take An Tostal very seriously, but there is one holiday that they observe to the hilt: Whitsunday —"Whit." This falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. It is a bank holiday in Ireland and everything pertaining to business hangs suspended until the "Whit" week end is past. Trains are stuffed with passengers going out of the city and stuffed with people coming in. If you are lucky enough to have a room or a *pension* or a hotel, lock the door tight, because sleeping accommodations are much sought after.

The streets are filled with people strolling, dressed in their best; bicyclists pedal in all directions. (One of the few times when Irish girls can be said to look sexy is when they are bicycling. Dressed in prim cotton dresses instead of the cycling pants affected by our own girls, the colleens suddenly take on a skittish and devilish air. The breezes fill the wide skirts of the prim frocks and flip and flap them around the lithe legs of the pedalers. You can see a lot of an Irish girl on a bicycle.)

In the parks of Dublin, the flowers seem to hold their heads higher and the flowery beds grow like jewels in the spring air. The Whit week end when Miss Witlov and I were in Dublin was as sweet a spring week end as one could hope for. The mysterious old city came to young life and smiled amiably.

It was a rather curious decision on our part to choose to ride

through the Dublin slums that Whit Monday. But that's what we did. For no good reason that I can remember, we asked to be driven through the famous—or infamous—Coombe.

The Coombe—which means "the Valley"—has a reputation about like New York's old Bowery, the old Lower East Side or Hell's Kitchen. Miss Witlov and I had heard that in the Coombe living conditions were the worst that could be imagined; that every building was a menace to health and safety; that in the Coombe humanity sank to its lowest level. On the sweetest of Whit Mondays we rode through the historic Coombe. We got quite a surprise.

The Coombe is a district of wide streets bordered, for the most part, by rather beautiful two- and three-story houses. These small houses, once the homes of wealthy people who lived in great style, have been taken over, through the years, by tenants whose way of life is not quite so stylish. Behind the prim windows and the delicately designed doors, the little old mansions have degenerated into rookeries and warrens. So they say. On Whit Monday, the Coombe looked as though butter wouldn't melt in its mouth.

Now and then we caught a glimpse, through an open door, of a dark hallway with paint peeling from damp walls. Occasionally we saw twisting alleys branching off from the wide, straight streets, and there the silvery Irish sunlight did little to brighten the gloom. These gave us an inkling that life in the Coombe was not all fresh sweetness; but even so, it required some effort to realize that this was the worst slum in Dublin. One thing sure, it looked better than any slum area in New York City.

The Irish set great store by "respectability." The wording of an ad in a newspaper, stating the need for a maid of all work, specifies "respectable girl or woman wanted." Any laboring man, any clerk, in fact anybody advertised for, must be "respectable." Once I saw in an old newspaper a cemetery notice which stated that only "respectable families" would be permitted to bury their dead in the cemetery grounds.

And even the Coombe maintained an air of respectability. Outwardly, at least, little fault could be found with the living conditions. Perhaps, behind the half-open doors and further down the twisting alleys, one would find stenches and slovenliness and abominations to offend the ear and the eye and the nose. But the main streets were clean and clear of all blowing newspapers and trash. No garbage cans, battered and atilt, spewed rotten contents on the walks for stray animals and unwary passers-by to trample. All was clean and serene.

We asked each other and we asked our driver, Sean O'Brien, "*This* is the dreadful Dublin slum area? *This* is the Coombe?"

Sean O'Brien said, "Oh, it's a tough place at night, all right! The policemen go by twos and threes through this district. They'd never dare to go alone!"

I'd have dared to go alone on that Whit Monday morning. All the people in the Coombe seemed to be quiet, ordinary citizens with a little time on their hands, as befitted a holiday morning. The children we saw were sitting on the curbstones, or standing in little groups on the house steps, or playing quietly together some of the involved games of childhood. There was no shouting and screaming such as goes on everywhere among the kids of New York. The children of the Coombe were neatly dressed. No silks and satins, of course, but plain, decent clothes; the girls with the added charm of big, colored hair ribbons like little windmills on top of their heads.

There was one crowd of a dozen or so of these youngsters waiting for a cinema to open. They were restless and milled around ceaselessly, licking orange-colored "lollies" or drippy ices. There was no horseplay or rough-and-tumble; yet the children looked healthy, rosy-cheeked and shiny-haired. None of them looked hungry or sick. And we saw no roving teen-agers who seemed ripe for the juvenile court or easy prey for dope peddlers, if such there be in the Coombe.

It may be that the Coombe comes to terrible life after dark.

There must be some reason why policemen go by twos and threes for protection. It all seemed too innocent and vapid.

I thought of the slum area at whose edge we live in New York City. It is considered by the police to be one of the most vicious and dangerous precincts in the city. Yet if you walk through the district by day, or even by night, you seldom see anything more sinister than a few Puerto Rican family men sitting quietly on the steps of the brownstone houses that these newcomers have taken for their own.

It is only when you learn of a child having been beaten to death in a small hotel halfway down the block, or hear that a man with his throat slit has been found dead in the areaway of a house nearby, that you realize that slums do not often reveal their hearts to passers-by.

Even a hurried check of Irish statistics dealing with drunkenness, tuberculosis or infant mortality will tell an ugly story. Dublin has contributed its share to these dreadful figures and the Coombe was where the statistics grew fat. But here and there throughout the infamous place, a tall building rises, with wide windows glittering in the sun. Often there are empty lots, where ancient rookeries have been demolished and new apartments will soon be erected to house the people who formerly lived in squalor. The roots of the place are being hacked away. Light and air are seeping into the dark Valley. The Coombe, like the old gray mare of the old American song, is patently not what she used to be.

The Coombe is the most famous of Irish slums, yet big-city slums are, in the very nature of things, pretty scarce in the Emerald Isle. This is a country of little towns, little market places of less than 5,000 population, for the most part. Only twenty-two cities in Ireland have more than 10,000 population.

Ireland is so sweetly rural. In spite of being right in the middle of air and sea traffic lanes, not remote from either Europe or the United States, Ireland remains a cozy nest of old-fashioned virtues and gentle, old-fashioned ways of life. This is chiefly because of

tempo; the rhythm of the country is dreamy, deliberate, leisurely. But even if dreamy, Ireland is none the less so stubborn and persistent that many young people are emigrating to countries where methods and ways of life are more streamlined.

Irish people to whom I talked always mentioned this problem of emigration. "It's like blood flowing out of our veins," they said, "it's killing the country."

I had to smile, although it was clearly no smiling matter. It reminded me of what is always being said about the American theatre. "The theatre is dying," has been said as long as I can remember. "Television has rung the death knell of live theatre," they said. "Live theatre can no longer survive in competition with the movies and radio. . . ." Yet the past theatre season has been the best within memory of constant theatre-goers and has resulted in a serious theatre shortage in New York, at least. A newspaper item of recent date states that the theatre is one of the most vital assets of New York as a city. Eighty percent of the visitors to the city come to town to attend the live theatre, and while they're in New York, they contribute nobly to the hotels and the shops and many other aspects of our life.

I feel that it is much the same with Ireland as it is with the theatre, so far as "dying" goes. Ireland has been "dying" from emigration since at least as far back as the 1700's. Great ships from France used to sail into the sheltered and remote harbors of Clare and Connaught and Kerry, bringing fine cargoes of brandy, laces and silks. These fine cargoes were taken ashore by the willing shore dwellers, who worked in cahoots with the shipmasters to smuggle the goods and get good prices for them. In return for these favors, the captains of the vessels took aboard shiploads of Irishmen who wished to emigrate to France and join the Irish Brigade there. The captains listed these emigrants as "Wild Geese" in the ship's papers, and the outflow of the Irishmen became known as "The Flight of the Wild Geese." The Irish government turned a blind eye to this defection of manpower

because conditions in the homeland were so miserable and terrible that a man could not find a livelihood.

It was in 1748 that the greatest number of "Wild Geese" packed aboard the French ships, escaping the hardships imposed by the enforcement of the old "Cromwellian Laws." After that date the Irish government, becoming scared at the vast number pouring out of the island, prohibited further enlistments in a belated effort to keep the men at home. The prohibition failed, of course, and the emigation went on, although somewhat lessened.

The tide of emigration rose again during and after the Potato Famine of 1845-47, when a potato blight fastened on the Irish tubers and wiped out the entire crop. Probably the crops in Ireland were not diversified enough at that time; too much land had been blindly put into potato growing. At any rate, the blight swept across the island in 1845, and the whole small continent withered and blackened under the touch of it. At that time the lushness of earlier times seems to have been less lush, for famine followed the potato blight and death from starvation followed the famine. The counties of Kerry and Mayo alone were reduced by half. Panicky and helpless from lack of food and hopeless as to the outlook for the future, at least a million Irish migrated; many of them to the United States. This migration—(it was more than emigration) and the great numbers of deaths, was a setback to Irish progress and development that is only just beginning to be overcome. The emigration started by the famine kept up for over fifty years, although not at such a tremendous rate as at first. Naturally, Ireland found itself drained of an enormous percentage of its man (and woman) power, and conditions there became increasingly miserable and desolate. It was a black time, and the black time is still clear in the Irish memory.

As a direct result of this terrible misfortune, great numbers of Irish people fought in the American Civil War, opened up trails to our unknown Far West, built our railroads across the continent,

and became the backbone, in New York City at least, of the Democratic Party.

Many of the Irish immigrants were of rural birth, and were deeply ignorant of the outside world and its ways; many others forced out of the homeland were educated people, with a background of culture and learning. Regardless of their origins, most of these people were forced to undertake the humblest tasks at the roughest work, which called for great physical endurance as well as the determination to succeed in the land of their adoption. And from the grand stock that fled the blackened fields of Ireland have come many of our own educators, public servants, scientists and successful businessmen, to enrich and ennoble America everywhere. The Irish in Ireland remember the Potato Famine with horror. The Americans can only regard it as a blessing in disguise.

Wherever we went in Ireland, Miss Witlov and I met or heard about people who were about to emigrate to England, to Australia or to the United States. Nearly every ship or plane carries an outbound Irish citizen, and his or her friends hold a macabre ceremony called an "American Wake." This is a farewell party, with overtones of death. The participants are well oiled, usually, and by the time the emigrant is off, nobody, including the emigrant, really cares at all.

And still Ireland, like the American theatre, goes marching on.

A friend of mine, an Irish "county" lady, now living abroad, was talking to me about this matter of emigration and I said to her, "It seems to me that the answer to emigration is immigration. At home, in the United States, when there is a shortage of labor, for instance, in any specialized field, we invite outsiders to come and help out. I remember once, nobody would herd sheep. Too lonesome a job, not enough money—things like that. Sheepherders went somewhere else and did something else and left the sheep to their own devices. So the sheep owners or the government or

somebody sent out invitations to Basque sheepherders, who are devoted to the job of tending sheep. And the Basques came, too, in great enough numbers to tide our shortage over. Now there is a shortage of tailors. Nobody in America will learn to be a tailor. Too much fussy handwork, too slow, not enough money. So some needlework union sent an invitation to Italian tailors to come over and be American tailors and a lot of them are coming over to work.

"I've never heard about Ireland inviting anybody to come into Ireland to work or to live permanently," I said. "Why not immigration?"

My friend's mouth quite literally dropped open.

"Outsiders taking over Irish land?" she gasped." Nobody would stand for it!" Then after a moment she added, "You may be right, but I simply can't endure the idea at all!"

Coming from the great melting-pot city of New York, Miss Witlov and I were constantly surprised to find how solidly Irish Ireland is. Riding through the streets of the little country towns or walking through the streets of the big cities, we saw that the names on the street signs and the store signs are always Irish names. O'Malley and Reilly, MacCarthy and O'Hare, Shea, Desmond; one after the other, the names are Irish only. It's all going out and none coming in, and no wonder the Irish are alarmed.

I was in no position to conduct a Gallup poll about the matter of emigration, but by chance I met a young woman in Cork who was about to emigrate to America and I asked her what her reasons were. She had been a clerk in an office in Cork city, and through business acquaintances she became interested in the chances for a career in the New World. It must have required a lot of courage and persistence to go through all the red tape and regulations required for emigration, and it must have been especially frightening for a girl of sheltered and religious background. Yet she had stubbornly done everything necessary and had met all requirements. She was sailing away the next week, leaving her parents

and her brothers and sisters and her homeland, never to return, "except for a visit." She was a pretty girl, timid and young. Yet the set of her jaw was determined and she carried her head high.

"What was the chief reason you decided to emigrate?" I asked, not expecting to hear any secrets, but hoping to get a general idea of what had started it all.

"Ah, it's the men!" the young lady burst out, and her mouth was sullen and her eyes were cold. "They're mama's boys, the lot of them—never one dares to get married before he's forty or so. The whole country's full of old bachelors! If a girl's to be married at all, she'd best be getting to some place where the old mothers don't be ruling the roost!"

It wasn't the first time I had heard complaints about the late marrying age of Irishmen, nor the first time I had heard the "old mothers" berated. But I hadn't expected a shy Irish girl to admit so much to a stranger. The fact that she had told the truth so baldly showed how finished she already was with the land of her birth. I kept very quiet, because I was scared. I only hoped she'd find a bachelor of *any* age in New York. Many of the young girls of that city seem to feel that all men get married practically in the cradle and few eligible males are to be had.

"If you walk on the same side of the street with a man when you're going to church," said the girl from Cork city, "he's scared you're after him and want to get married. Ah, they're a desperate lot!"

What the girl said is surely borne out along the roads everywhere in Ireland. The girls walk together on one side of the road, the men—close huddled for security—on the other. The young people who are out bicycling ride in segregated groups, male and female separated ride they. The men prefer to herd together whenever possible. When I was being taken on a tour of Jacobs' Biscuit Factory in Dublin, one of the oldest and most famous manufacturing plants in Ireland, the gentleman who was my guide showed me the employees' lunchrooms—separate rooms for men

and for women. When I expressed surprise over this, the gentleman said that once, when it was necessary to make some repairs in the men's lunchroom, and it was closed, the men were directed to eat in the women's lunchroom for the time being.

"There was nearly a riot," the gentleman told me. "The men refused flatly to eat with the women and sat on the stairs to eat in preference."

This may be an extreme example of skittishness and timidity, because other factories I visited scoffed at the idea of separate lunchrooms and showed me the big, sunny common rooms. Even so, the Irishman has an unenviable reputation for being a laggard in love. Long ago, I remember laughing over a poem by Moira O'Neill, the poetess of the Glens of Antrim. Although it is a sweet and heart-touching little verse, it shows only too plainly what an Irish girl can expect in the way of attention and devotion:

The wrack was dark and shining where it floated in the sea,
There was no one in the brown boat, but only him and me,
Him to cut the sea wrack, me to mind the boat,
An' not a word between us the hours we were afloat.

He probably thought he was doing her enough of a favor just to be alone in the boat with her.

Further light was thrown on the emigration of young Irishwomen by an elderly Irish professor (married) with a reputation for a sharp tongue and delight in using it.

"No doubt about it," he told me, "young Irishwomen have got to get out of Ireland if they want any romance or married life. It's all a vicious circle and it's getting worse every day. For one reason and another—no need to go too deep into the basic reasons —Irishmen are taught to look upon women as seducers. In youth they are told that girls try to seduce young men from their studies, from their home and from their *mothers*. Later on they are told women try to seduce men from the practice of their professions

and the earning of a living. Women represent *sex*, in this country, which is synonymous with *sin*. Even the marital relationship is regarded as seduction from virtue and the women are always blamed for it. Men won't mix with women if they can help it; women everywhere are regarded as interlopers. And particularly in the workingman's pub," said my informant bitterly, evidently out of some frustration of his own. He thought a minute. "But dammit, they interlope anyhow," he said savagely.

"There you have one side of it," said the waspish professor, "and the other side is the attitude of the women themselves. From earliest childhood they have it drummed into them that virginity is the jewel of the world and I'm not saying it's not. It must be cherished and guarded as the most essential attribute of woman. The loss of virginity is the blackest shame that can be brought upon a girl or upon her family. Well, you can't dump all that overboard in ten minutes. The deep mark of the training of early years persists all through life. A girl can't get rid of her fear of the loss of virginity in an hour or two. Even though the priest sanctifies its loss after marriage, the feeling of sin and shame follows an Irish girl into the bridal chamber and ever afterward in the marriage bed. An Irish girl never gets over the feeling that she has fallen from grace when she submits—submits, mind you—to physical relationship with her husband. The man believes this, too. So they live together in tension and shame until the husband escapes to the shooting and the fishing and the eternal guzzling of Guinness in the pub with other beleaguered and shamefaced husbands. The wife is left alone to tend the family that has somehow made its appearance.

"The tremulous bride has now become the domineering mother," continued the professor. "In trying to forget her own lapse from 'purity' her one aim is now to prevent her children from following her footsteps. The girls must be kept virgin. The boys must be sheltered from the knowledge of desire. . . . And so, the result is emigration. Few young men and women in this island defy their

parents. So they drift out of the sphere of the parents' authority. And it all goes back to the Irish idea of *sex*.

"Once when one of our leading Irish politicians and statesmen came home from a visit to Paris—Eamon de Valera, I think it was—somebody asked him what he thought of Paris. He said with a perfectly straight face, 'All I can say is, that sex in Ireland is only in its infancy!' "

This analysis of the emigration problem interested me enormously, but I could not help thinking that there must be other reasons for emigration. The emigrants from Ireland may feel that their only chance for self-determination lies elsewhere. For the most part, compared to America at least, working hours in Ireland are long and the pay is low. What the restless and dissatisfied emigrant does not know and probably does not care to know is that life outside Ireland is rougher, the pace killing, and the competition savage. Life in the big cities of the New World lacks the grace and charm of life in the small, green villages of Ireland. Youth, however, will be served, and it is not always leisurely charm and grace of living that entice it.

Ian MacCarthy of the Irish Tourist Bureau in Dublin, himself a most chauvinistic Irishman, said to Miss Witlov and me very sourly, "What I do not understand is: why is it that a young man who is a failure in Ireland will go out of the country and become a success? At home he's lazy, drunken, unwilling to make the least effort. Abroad, it seems that nothing's too much for him. I can't understand it. Why can't they make that much effort at home?"

The obverse side of that picture was shown to me by a very large, very handsome, very forthright Irish doctor to whom I had to take an Irish throat germ I had somewhere picked up. I mentioned emigration, which was at that time engrossing my thoughts.

"Let 'em emigrate!" said the doctor in a deep, plush voice (those musical Irish voices!). "Let 'em emigrate, the whole kit and

kaboodle! They're a lazy, stupid, drunken lot and they're no good here and no good anywhere else. Good riddance! Let 'em go!"

The Irish government, however, does not feel the way the doctor does about the continued loss of manpower. To conserve manpower, Ireland is beginning to offer its workers better working conditions and better wages. Its future as a nation rests upon improved conditions of life.

Nowhere in the world is the working citizen treated with the dignity and consideration that is accorded him in the United States. Accorded? That is hardly the word. The working people of America demand consideration. It is not until an American travels abroad that he realizes that only in America does the worker live the life of Reilly. He doesn't live the life of Reilly in Ireland, that's sure.

For instance, as one small example of this, in the hotels no elevator is supplied for employees' use and employees are not permitted in passenger elevators. Waiters and waitresses are required to carry heavy trays, heavily laden, from the kitchens up several flights of stairs to travelers requiring room service. The other employees of hotels—chambermaids, porters and the like—work very long hours. I have seen a girl who made up a fire for me at seven-thirty in the morning still trotting gravely through the halls about some task or other at ten-thirty at night. These hotel working conditions are representative of all working conditions in Ireland, but the general trend at present is toward changing them all for the better.

Definite and concerted effort is also being made to industrialize the dear little isle and I'm very sorry to hear it. I'd stop it, if I could. I regret to think of that mother-of-pearl sky being stabbed by the fierce black fingers of towering smokestacks, and the sweet, free air being poisoned by belching, sulphurous smoke. The whole place will be as bad as Los Angeles or New York, if the present plans carry through.

Ireland has always been an agricultural country—a garden place.

It's true that once the garden place got too specialized and went in for potatoes to the exclusion of nearly every other garden product, which resulted in the Potato Famine of terrible memory. Ireland today, nearly a hundred years later, is only just shakily emerging from the shadow cast by the Famine. Emerging and turning away from the garden to the factory chimney, more's the pity. I want Ireland to stay agricultural, to specialize in luxury garden products. I want them to keep factories out of there.

We read of times back through the years when Ireland was sitting very pretty as an agricultural nation. In 1700, an old record states, there was an overflowing plenty to feed all citizens and any army quartered on the country. No land in Europe, for its size, had such flocks of sheep or such great herds of black cattle. There was a vast exportation of slaughtered beef and of wool and grain. At that time the city of Cork alone used to slaughter ten thousand bullocks a season. Tipperary alone could supply enough wool to clothe an army. Less than half the production of wheat from County Meath was enough to supply the army with bread and Ulster had no trouble supplying enough linen. Butter, cheese, vegetables, fish and pork were in such abundance that the civilian and military populations were full fed and fat.

Yet at present, and in spite of the Irish mania for dwelling on the past, industrialization is the aim and the hope, and I say it's a shame. However, I take comfort in the fact that it's certain to be some time before the swift-running tide of global industrialization engulfs Ireland. She's just not geared to the hammer-and-tongs business life of, say, the United States; a certain naïveté will remain for some time. Let's hope to make Ireland an occasional refuge from all those supercivilizations where the daily grind is enough to smooth the nose off your face.

The plans for the industrialization of Ireland include encouraging American industrial investment there. Mr. Donal Scully, Irish Trade Consul, who represents the Irish Industrial Development Authority in the United States, says that American response to

this effort is becoming very encouraging. Up to now, however, American capitalists have invested less in Ireland than in any other European country.

I wrote to a friend of mine, Mr. Robert W. Dowling, President of the City Investing Company, at 25 Broad Street, New York City, to ask his opinion in the matter. "Why don't American capitalists invest in or establish industries in Ireland?" I asked.

Mr. Dowling is always willing to stop investing long enough to answer any questions I may ask, and this time he wrote as follows:

Perhaps the answer to your question regarding the industrialization of Ireland is that it has been considered as an agricultural community with spots of learning and historic interest. . . . I talked recently with two managers of a tool company who have established a branch factory in Ireland and they find results only partially satisfactory. Their German branch factory is doing a better job and is certainly easier to manage.

The new tax advantages now being offered to foreign investors have a very good chance of achieving their aims. The trick has been done beautifully in Puerto Rico. What is needed is more publicity. Puerto Rico got pages of space in Fortune. *Perhaps a series of good articles in* Fortune *and other financial publications would be just as good as an expensive advertising campaign. . . .*

I am giving the Irish government this exclusive advice free of charge. And Mr. Dowling can go back to his investing.

In a booklet issued by the Industrial Development Authority in the spring of 1956, there is this charming note inside the front cover: "Our cover shows a photograph of Ben Bulben, where large deposits of barytes are worked. The Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, is buried nearby." Can you imagine a booklet published by the General Electric Company, for instance, saying, "This is a view of our Schenectady plant. The poet Robert Frost lives just across the border in Vermont?" Although Ireland is perusing the pages

of industrialization with great devotion, she keeps her finger in her poetry book and may she never lose her place!

I visited several modern Irish factories, established in excellent buildings of glass and concrete and set in landscaped grounds. They operated under the most up-to-date business and labor conditions. The Irish Rope Company, of Newbridge, said to be one of the best of the new plants, was one I visited. The Gateaux Cake Company is another—a model of sanitary manufacturing conditions. New methods are always being examined in the present-day factories and the manufacturers are not slow in adopting whatever new ways seem to be helpful and valid.

I met interesting, alert businessmen and I was shown the products of their brave new factories with justifiable pride. Nobody could ask to sink a tooth into a tastier fruit cake than the Gateaux Company exports to America—sold under the York House label in R. H. Macy's in New York City. And the Tintawn Rugs produced by the Irish Rope Company would certainly fit admirably into American summer living. (These brilliantly colored, informal sisal carpetings are sold in W. & J. Sloane's, on Fifth Avenue in New York.)

The F. & J. Clayton Company, manufacturers of Navan and Millwoven tweeds, interested me enormously, chiefly because many things about this company remain stubbornly Irish even in the face of the new methods that have been somewhat reluctantly adopted.

This plant is in County Meath, the Iowa of Ireland. Lush, green, fertile land supports fine herds of cattle and produces fine harvests of corn and other grains. There, in the midst of this blooming plenty, a small woolen mill was established in 1837 and there it stands today, brought up to date in both plant and product.

On the banks of the rushing river that supplies the power for the mill, stone mill buildings cluster around the stone mansion of

the owner, Mr. Patrick Gallagher. There is a feudal air about this establishment, as there is about the Crock of Gold. It seems to be as much a family enterprise as the Crock of Gold, too, but it is not.

Mr. Patrick Gallagher, owner and president of the company, is a man as wary as a falcon, tense and reserved. He is a gentleman of the old school, if by that you mean he is master in his house and his mill. You can see it in every move, even if you did not recognize it in every word. Mr. Gallagher is a bachelor. And I may be wrong, but it's my guess that Mr. Gallagher is a tough baby.

The story of how this Mr. Gallagher, who had always operated his mill by Irish methods and by Irish standards, was persuaded to change in order to lure the American dollar is just about as funny as anything I heard while I was in Ireland. The cream of the jest is that Mr. Gallagher told me the story himself and recognized the comical aspects for what they were. Tough he may be; humorless, no.

When the Board of Directors decided to try for the American market, Mr. Gallagher reluctantly agreed. He was, and always had been, to put it bluntly, anti-American. Rolling his falcon eyes at me and looking down his falcon nose, Mr. Gallagher said, ruefully, "It was a r-r-r-rotten thing to be." But there it was. Anti-American and no denying it. Nevertheless, good American dollars were passing Millwoven tweeds by. If, by a slight adjustment of attitude, the F. & J. Clayton Company could garner some of these highly desirable ducats, Mr. Gallagher was willing to make a try.

When the Board of Directors very gently advanced the idea that in order to manufacture a product attractive to American taste, the thing to do was to employ an American adviser, Mr. Gallagher agreed that this was logical. Then the Board of Directors really had news for Mr. Gallagher. Such an adviser had already been approached and was about to arrive in County Meath. Not only an American; a woman.

Mr. Gallagher had been pushed too far. Mr. Gallagher said the Irish equivalent of "Drop dead."

Well, they soothed him and they smoothed him and they said so long as she's coming anyway, just meet her and talk to her. What harm can that do? Mr. Gallagher, a reactionary Irish bachelor, said he wouldn't do anything of the kind. But he finally did.

Mrs. Ellin Brooklight, a young American designer and surveyor of consumer trends, came to the Clayton plant and went into conference with the bristling and resentful Mr. Gallagher. I deeply regret not having been present at that conference.

"After one morning with that American woman," Mr. Gallagher told me, "I was taken over completely. She had a solid knowledge of markets; her ideas for design were so fresh and appealing. In fact, the woman knew what she was talking about. All our new materials, called Navan tweeds, are at her advice. . . ." Mr. Gallagher shook his head in bewilderment, still astonished at his instant capitulation.

"Yes," he said, "I was anti-American. Now I'm reading American literature!"

"How much would the Navan tweeds sell for at retail?" I asked Mr. Gallagher. He waved the question away.

"I haven't the foggiest," he answered me airily.

So, Mr. Gallagher, although regenerate to a large degree, cannot be said to have gone over to American business methods one hundred percent. His heart, as William Saroyan didn't quite say, is still smack dab in the Irish highlands.

Sweepstakes

In Ireland, everything seems to be about one forty-eighth as large as in America. But one operation in Ireland is certainly king-size, big enough even for the State of Texas. The Irish Sweepstakes.

The Sweepstakes headquarters is in Ballsbridge, Dublin, and since many Dublin institutions are centuries old, it came as a surprise to realize that the famous Irish Sweepstakes have been in operation only about twenty-five years.

The idea of the Sweepstakes took shape in 1930 and was the brain child of a man named Joseph McGrath. The combination of Joe McGrath and the Sweepstakes is an absolute natural and makes quite a story.

Mr. McGrath does not look like a violet. He is a big man, flowerlike in neither appearance nor bearing. Yet he is as shy as a violet when it comes to personal publicity. It is impossible, however, for such a man to hide in the shadows. Joe McGrath is in the romantic tradition of the legendary heroes of ancient Ireland and it's too late now for him to do anything about it. Indeed, had he lived in the Old Times he would have had his own personal bard to compose poems for him and sing them to his glory. It would not surprise me to learn that Joe McGrath's right hand is much bigger than his left after the manner of King Guaire of

Connaught. This king, in the seventh century, stretched out his right hand to help people and gave them so much that it grew larger than his left. With the Sweepstakes behind him Joe McGrath beats King Guaire all hollow.

He started out demurely enough. Since he had real mathematical ability, he got a job as an accountant and that lasted until he discovered that his outlook on life was too large and too bold for him to be satisfied with small-time jobs. His path led him to the labor movement and finally he became a union official. He took active part in the Easter Rising of 1916, and became pretty well known to the British. So well known, in fact, that the British had him in and out of jail for more than two years.

At the beginnings of the Provisional Government, Joe McGrath accepted the post of Minister of Labor. But politics couldn't satisfy him, either, and he served only one term, refusing to stand for re-election. A great new hydroelectric plant was being constructed on the Shannon, and no better boy could be found to take over the general organization and supervision of that vast project than former Labor Minister Joseph McGrath.

It was probably because of this life of varied interests and his record of successful meeting and working with people that he got destiny's nod in 1930. Looking back, what he did seems simple enough, as all great ideas seem simple. Taking the Irishman's love of a horse race plus the Irishman's love of betting on a horse race, he added these two to Ireland's desperate need for money for hospitals. The composite picture spelled Sweepstakes.

Writing of the Sweepstakes, the Right Reverend Monsignor Donald A. McGowan, Director of the Bureau of Health and Hospitals, said: "Thus, through the efforts of the Irish people and in *their own characteristic way,* the sick in Ireland have come into their own and are treated as human beings and Christians."

(The italics are mine.)

In 1930 there wasn't a hospital worthy of the name in Ireland, although the tradition of Irish medicine is an ancient and proud

one. The skill of Irish doctors and surgeons has always been commended in world medical circles. But through the years the state of the Irish hospitals had become deplorable and because of her many other troubles Ireland was unable to do anything about it.

The collapse of the Irish hospital system goes back, I'm told, to the times of Henry VIII and Cromwell. (Everything bad in Ireland had its origin in those times and we might as well face it.) Hospitals in Ireland were outlawed by Henry VIII, if you can imagine such a thing, and then along came Cromwell and blasted what was left of Irish civilization.

It was not until a couple of hundred years later that even a feeble attempt was made to establish a hospital in Ireland. Six surgeons in Dublin pooled their efforts and founded a charitable clinic for the treatment of the poor. Other clinics and small hospitals gradually came into existence, and although they operated on terribly small budgets, at least they made a start toward service to the sick.

When Ireland finally got her independence, all her hospitals were in a pitiable state. There had never been any money for improvements and the buildings were all so antiquated as to be unsafe and nearly useless. As is usual in this sort of situation, everybody and everything was in desperate need of money at the same time. And everything seemed to get a better break than the hospitals. Any money the hospitals managed to obtain was found through an occasional lottery and bazaar, and these, of course, brought only a pittance—merely enough to meet emergencies and to keep the clinics and hospitals from having to close their doors entirely.

It occurred to Joe McGrath that instead of each hospital or clinic holding a small, unprofitable lottery, it would be a good idea to have a large lottery in which all the medical centers could have a share.

He talked the whole thing over with two friends, Richard Duggan and Spencer Freeman, and all three realized that the plan

would be of enormous magnitude. They were sure that tremendous difficulties would be encountered in getting such a scheme launched. But they hit the line with the bulldozer impact of men who know that they have come upon a can't-fail scheme. And when finally legislation was enacted making the Sweepstakes legal, they knew they were on their way. From the very beginning it has been a wild success.

The first Sweepstakes was on the Manchester November Handicap and six hospitals benefited from it, besides the people who won prizes. The first Sweepstakes Prize Fund amounted to $1,169,238—considerably more than anybody had expected, except possibly Joe McGrath.

The first prize ever won on the Sweepstakes—the first *first* prize, that is—amounted to $584,617.60. Three men of Belfast held the winning ticket and their names go down in history: Prescott, Tormey and Ward.

The second prize won on the first Sweepstakes was $233,847.60, and A. P. Dawe, of Vancouver, B. C., Canada, was the lucky boy. The third prize was $116,922.40, and Mrs. Thompson, of Worksop, England, won it. I hope she hasn't worked a sop since.

Well, naturally everybody began to ask, "What's going on around here?" and when the next Sweepstakes came along, there was no trouble getting people to buy tickets. And there never has been any trouble since, although during the last war the Sweepstakes naturally had to stand aside for a while. Other things seemed more important to everybody, although a few of the faithful remained to keep the Sweeps going even under adverse conditions. There have been all kinds of annoyances besides wars: counterfeit tickets, rival lotteries, foreign antilottery laws. But the Irish Sweepstakes organized by Joseph McGrath and his two friends just goes rolling along.

Mr. McGrath, Mr. Duggan, and Mr. Freeman are directors of the corporation and get fixed salaries. Neither they nor their families ever have a ticket on the Sweepstakes. It would be just

Joe McGrath's luck to win a big prize, and what a scandal that would be!

The first headquarters of the Sweepstakes company was in a pretty little house in Earlsfoot Terrace and the clerical force consisted of one typist. Today the organization is housed in one of the largest office buildings in the world, all steel and glass and concrete, and the clerical staff during the rush season is sometimes four thousand strong.

The first prize fund in 1930, that astonishing $1,169,238, gave the ailing hospitals a marvelous shot in the arm. The hospitals got about one third of the entire prize, which was more money than they had had since the time of Henry VIII. At first the money obtained from this fund and from the others that followed was used to renovate the battered old buildings and to try to modernize the completely outmoded appliances and furnishings. But after a few years a really excellent program of hospital construction was begun and this program continues today. Since the inauguration of the Sweepstakes, more than one hundred million dollars has been made available for the building of new hospitals in Ireland. Only one tenth of the Sweepstakes funds is spent on administrative expenses.

Three hundred hospitals and medical institutions affording free medical and surgical treatment share in the Sweepstakes, under the supervision of an associated hospitals committee. Each Sweepstakes is regarded as a separate plan and the Minister of Justice must pass upon its validity before it can proceed.

Laws governing the Sweeps do not permit the distribution of any of the Hospitals Fund outside Ireland, although anybody anywhere who is lucky enough to get hold of a winning ticket will, of course, be paid off. But a special government fund, quite separate from the Sweepstakes, has been set up whereby medical research in any part of the world may receive grants for the furtherance of its work. It is to the Medical Research Council of Ireland that applications for these grants must be made. The

members of this council are drawn from universities of the highest standing in Ireland, and they make the nominations for research grants.

No trouble is spared to make certain that everything in connection with the Sweepstakes draw is completely honest. In fact, the system used in collecting the tickets and storing them, and in the final selection of the winning numbers is so involved and inviolate that it makes me dizzy just to read about it. It is enough to say that even Willy Sutton, the famous American bank robber, could not figure out a way to beat the absolute integrity of the process. Many mechanical operations are involved and even these are supervised within an inch of their lives by people whose integrity cannot be questioned. You may rest assured that anybody who wins a lucky number in the Sweepstakes is Dame Fortune's own darling. Your neighborhood bazaar, or the seashore bingo game, or the tables at Las Vegas and Reno, may have percentages heavily in favor of the house. But the Irish Sweepstakes is purely the instrument of chance.

If the processes involved in the collection, storage and final mixing and choosing of the tickets seem elaborate, the way the horses are chosen and what goes on in the arranging of the prize money is more than I—unscientific and unhorsy—can tell you. All I know is that a lot of people get the names of horses that are to run in a race. And when some of those horses win, or place or show, or do anything except turn around and run the wrong way—people win money. What do you care, anyhow, so long as you win? Tickets cost about a pound—$2.80 and must never, never be purchased in the United States, you naughty, naughty thing.

The budget for the 1956 Sweepstakes is as follows:

Total proceeds	£3,683,990	$10,315,172.00
Prize Fund	2,011,277	5,631,575.60
16 First prizes, each	50,000	140,000.00

16 Second prizes, each	20,000	56,000.00
16 Third prizes, each	10,000	28,000.00
1,504 Horse prizes, each	319	893.20
50 Residual prizes, each	1,825	5,110.00
1,120 Cash prizes, each	100	280.00
4,800 Consolation prizes, each	10	28.00
Hospitals Fund	897,958	2,514,282.40
Stamp Duty	224,490	628,572.00
Available for hospitals	673,468	1,885,710.40

Before I went to Ireland I knew several things about the Sweepstakes. I knew:

It's illegal to buy an Irish Sweepstakes ticket in N. Y.

If you buy one anyhow, it's likely to be counterfeit.

If you buy one and it's not counterfeit, you probably won't win.

If you buy one and it's not counterfeit and you *do* win, the United States government takes a great big bite out of your winnings and says blandly that it's legal to do it.

In spite of all this, and maybe because of it, too, I considered the whole idea entrancing and I wanted to buy a ticket for a nice, fat chance at a nice, fat prize.

"Where can I buy a ticket for the Irish Sweepstakes?" I asked my husband.

"Where can't you?" he asked me.

But the only one I bought, I bought from a hairdresser and the ticket was a counterfeit. As a matter of fact, the hairdresser was no good, either. Never had a worse haircut in my life!

When I got to Ireland I bought the realest kind of a real Sweepstakes ticket in Cork and another one in Dublin, and I didn't win *again.*

But a lot of people *do* win, and here's a violet for Joe McGrath for having thought of the Sweepstakes to begin with.

Part III

come to Blarney from all over the world to kiss the Stone, I think very few have done it merely because they were eager to obtain the specific gift it is supposed to bestow: the gift of persuasive eloquence. Most people just want to be able to say they have kissed the Blarney Stone. It proves that you have traveled, and that you are pretty daring; because even though the original manner of kissing the Stone has been eased and is something now that even a stout middle-aged lady can negotiate without much trouble, still, it requires climbing to the top of the castle and the little spiral stairways are tricky and narrow.

In the old days, in order to kiss the Stone, you had to be lowered head first over the edge of the parapet by a brawny fellow who grasped you by the ankles. When you got approximately opposite the Stone, you gave it—or approximately it—a terrified and hurried peck and were hauled, bumping and scraping, back over the edge of the roof. There are stories of adventurers seeking eloquence who were let fall by the holder of ankles and who landed in a broken mass at the foot of the tower. But that never deterred other people who had come for the blessing of the Stone. Crowds of small boys used to congregate under the Stone on kissing days to gather up the loose change that fell from the pockets of the upside-down visitors. It was not considered good form to try to retrieve any such pennies from heaven. Also, it never did any good, since the small boys were as agile as rabbits.

Life in many of its aspects has grown softer through the years, even in Ireland. Lately a new method has been devised whereby the ardent kisser can stay within the walls while he does his osculating. I can well imagine the scorn an old-time kisser would feel for any of the Johnny-come-latelies who approach the treasure from inside the walls instead of hanging head down.

An opening has been made in the floor of the tower, just above the Stone. Over the Stone, two strong iron bars have been fastened to the wall for the adventurer to hold on to. The modern method is as follows: Sit down on the floor, with your back to the edge

of the opening. Bend backwards and reach out with your hands for the bars. Hanging on tight, lower yourself into the little hole, while a nice old man, with a stubble of bronzy-white whiskers on his chin, holds you tenderly by one shoulder. Upside down and laughing fit to kill, you make a slobbery dab at what is pointed out to you as the Blarney Stone—a big, rough, granite-looking thing. While you are so engaged, an enterprising gentleman whom you do not see will take a snapshot of you. When you emerge, triumphant and a little abashed from this minor endeavor, he presents you with a printed slip advising you to send to a certain address in Cork to get the finished picture. My photograph, taken hanging head down in the Blarney Hole, was better than any portrait I ever posed for in an expensive glamor-photographer's studio in New York. So, whatever the other advantages of my trip to Blarney may be, I consider the adventure a distinct success for that reason alone.

The approach to the castle and the whole routine of kissing the Blarney Stone are handled in the same gentle, absent-minded, unsophisticated way the Irish do everything. There is no noisy, high-powered whoop-de-do at all. At the edge of the field where the castle stands, you park your car—or are required to leave the bus. You walk to a small booth, where a pleasant lady takes your entrance fee—I forgot what it is, but very little. To make an unromantic digression here, it occurred to me that the owners of Blarney Castle must make a very nice income from the admission fees. Millions of people visit the place every year.

You can also buy, for ninepence, an Official Guide Booklet, and I sincerely advise buying this guide and reading *as you go*. I bought one, but put it away, thinking that of course the castle would be crawling with talkative guides who would form a queue of the visitors and explain everything until we were all weary and half dead. There are no guides; nobody to tell you anything. Few signs—not enough, I think. At any rate, you're on your own and the booklet is invaluable.

The souvenir hut, which stands near the admittance booth, is a meek little thing with a few postcards, knickknacks, handkerchiefs and so on. The whole enterprise is very rural; you'd think it was all something new and they didn't quite know how to go about it, but it's been there for years and years. To an American used to importunities and concessionaires in mass formation, it all is as restful and quiet as a happy dream.

From the entrance and souvenir booths, a little path winds through a green meadow, across a rushing brook by way of a rustic bridge, then to a thin grove of trees and the castle. It is all so quiet and amiable—the little path, the whole atmosphere of the place—that the feeling of anticipation is heightened as it could never be by the clamor and yackety-yack of a herd of guides.

The day Miss Witlov and I drove out to Blarney with Sean O'Brien was what the Irish call a pet day. It is a six-mile trip out of Cork city and the weather was all soft sunshine and billowing clouds. But it *had* been raining and the approach to the castle looked pretty long and muddy to my friend. She decided to wait for us in the car, and since she had no need for the gift of gilded words, I did not argue with her. She had, as precedent for non-kissing, that brilliant Irishman G. B. Shaw, who remarked blandly that he was getting along all right without kissing the stone—and proved it. However, I took for my example the Honorable Winston Churchill, who made no bones about wanting to kiss the Stone and did so. I wish I had been there to see him.

Our driver, Sean O'Brien, went with me to the castle. We were the only visitors at that time. I put my booklet in my tote bag, instead of reading it as we went along.

The trees that grow about the castle are interesting in themselves. Some people say that the real definition of the word "Blarney" is "grove." Others maintain that "Blarney" means "field," and still others say, "a flowery urn." However, it has come to mean persuasive eloquence and the reason for the change is told in detail in the invaluable booklet I mention. I like the definition

"grove," best, for the trees stand around in a mystical solemnity. Some of them are like our sycamores, so far as the streaky-white bark goes, but the leaves are like evergreen needles. Sean O'Brien said that they are called "palms." I made up a poem about them:

The sycamore trees have pine-tree leaves
And they call them "palms" in Blarney.

When I told my husband about them he said, "Larch trees. Larch." Whatever they are, I had never seen them before.

One old giant of a tree is a cedar of Lebanon. It's battered and scarred and wind-bitten, but still a good old monster, stretching its limbs wide. Of course there's a story about it. You can't be a big old tree in Ireland without there being a story about you. It is thought that this tree probably came from the Holy Land. When one of the owners of Blarney Castle went crusading five or six hundred years ago, he brought back a seedling and planted it there beside his home in memory of his great adventure and to give shade and a feeling of pride to his descendants. It's not everybody who has a forefather who was an authentic Crusader.

Before we entered the castle, we walked around it and saw the strange entrances to terrible dungeons and passageways that are said to honeycomb the ground beneath the building. Once more I was depressed by the evidence of man's barbarism in past days, but I was a little encouraged to think that we have made some progress so far as brutality to enemies goes. Very few places, comparatively speaking, have such black dungeons and horrible cells. Dungeons and cells were mandatory in any up-to-date castle in the early days. Being without such things was probably like being without wall-to-wall carpeting or a deep-freeze in America today. If you don't have them, you're simply not *anybody;* and in the fifteenth century a queen was nobody without a cellar full of prison cells.

The thing that impressed me most about the castle—and immediately, too—was that I could feel that this place had been a home. People had really lived here; families had spent their days and years in these small, ugly, damp stone-walled rooms. Something had gone on here; life had been lived.

In one big, roofless area, where today you can stand and look up at the pale Irish sky, feasts were once held. This was a great hall, and remnants of the ceiling timbers can still be seen. Here lords and ladies sat at table and retinues of servants waited upon them. Wolfhounds lay under the tables, snapping at scraps and gnawing bones. A huge fire smoldered and smoked in the maw of the gigantic fireplace and little page boys or buxom country kitchen maids tended the fire and threw peat on it, or wood. There was a loud tumult of laughter and singing and talk; there was dancing. Intrigue and tragedy were played out under the ceiling of which no trace save the timbers remains.

The narrow, spiral stone stairs which you must climb to reach the upper floors of the castle are worn more slippery and crooked all the time by the feet of the thousands of tourists who come to kiss the Stone. But they were slippery and crooked before the tourists appeared, made that way by the people who lived so long in the big, dank castle—a castle as much a fort as a dwelling place, as much a prison as a home. And those who lived here were considered to be living in great style, in the very lap of luxury. What an uncomfortable, wretched way of life it must have been.

There is one tiny room called the room of the Baroness. It has a dirt floor and a slit of a window looks out over the Irish lea. It's easy to picture the lady in her trailing, bright silks, standing bemused at the glassless opening, looking at the green and lovely country spreading out below, like a picture from an old manuscript. The Baroness, I think, must have been a schemer, too. There was a listening hole in the stone wall of this small chamber, and when people went up or down the stairway, the Baroness could

press her ear against the listening hole and overhear whatever gossip or plot was being talked over that day.

The Castle of Blarney seems to me to be far more interesting than the Stone itself. Later, after I had wandered through most of the rooms until I found myself almost hypnotized with dreaming of their former uses and their former occupants, I came to the roof and stood and looked over the parapet. There, not far away, was another castle, much like the one where I was standing, but in good order, not falling gently into ruin and decay. Smoke was coming from the chimneys. Cows were browsing in the field near by. A farm man and a farm boy were opening a gate and going about some homely task concerning the farm. The owners of Blarney Castle live in that other castle and I was so curious about them and their lives that I could hardly pull myself away from staring and wondering to get at the real business that had brought me to Blarney. I finally tore myself away and went about getting the Stone kissed.

So I kissed it, and tipped the old man, but not before I had exacted from him the last, full measure of devotion.

"Why kiss this particular stone?" I asked, not having done my homework and not having read the Guide Booklet. The old man sighed and sat down at the edge of the hole in the floor and put his feet down into it and stared at his feet. The sunlight glinted on the bronze-and-white of his whiskers, and he went through a mumbling rigamarole that tickled me so much that I nearly fell into the hole beside his feet. I was leaning close to hear him, for his little lecture was told in a soft, Irish voice and mostly in Gaelic, I think. Whatever he said, I didn't catch a word of it; but he was an old darling, and probably sick of the whole business, too.

I know this: I wouldn't have missed it for the world, but once was enough. He's probably still out there and the very thought of it makes me tired. Still, it's every man to his own device when it comes to making a living and that's the way fate chose for him. After all, he's no worse off than he would have been being a

road's edge, is a carpet of violets and primroses, pale purple, pale yellow, luminous in the pale sunlight. Daffodils grow wild at the edges of the cold, still lakes. Separating the rolling hills into patchwork are the brilliant furze bushes, yellow as vigorous as a shout, almost orange against the new green of the new grass. Fuchsias, those delicate plants we tend with such care in flower pots on window sills at home, grow wild in hedges six to eight feet high along the Irish roadside, swinging the dull-red-and-yellow-striped bells soundlessly in the teasing spring winds. Ferns are uncurling, anchored tenaciously in the thin soil that barely covers the rock. Along the seashore, sea pinks and marshmallow, wild pansies and violets grow just above the high-tide mark.

All the romantic and poetic spring appears to be back of a scrim curtain. The colors of the Irish spring are pastel colors; the bird voices, like the Irish voices, are silver-thin and silken. The spring sky, no twanging blue like the spring sky of America, is pale and delicate behind the swelling, sailing, ever present Irish clouds.

April and May laugh their girlish laughter and weep their tears without ceasing during the Irish spring. One thing you can be sure of: the weather will always be changeable and capricious.

The most sensible remark I heard about the Irish weather was made by Mrs. Hugh Smith, of Dublin.

"Ah, well," said Mrs. Smith firmly, "we can't help our climate, now can we? And we've plenty else to think about."

I had hoped to meet some Irish people socially, and to learn to understand them. I met a good many, to my delight, but the Irish personality never became crystal clear. I lived for a year in Russia once, and when I returned home I felt as though I had really come to know at least a little about what makes the Russians tick. I know that I could live ten years in Ireland and would be no further forward so far as understanding the Irish goes.

On a rayon dress I bought in New York recently there was a

tag which had printed upon it: "There are certain characteristics of this material which must not be considered imperfections." I thought, "That's true of the Irish. Certain characteristics which must not be considered imperfections. They're inherent in the weave."

A titled lady we met in Ireland, an Englishwoman married to an Irish lord, said to Miss Witlov, "There's something about the Irish people that can never be explained. It slips away from you. There's always an undercurrent, and an underground undercurrent, at that."

Miss Witlov and I felt it everywhere. We found the Irish perfectly friendly, but back of the cool gaze are secrets. The old song, "When Irish eyes are smiling," isn't true. Irish eyes seldom smile. People along the way, the people at the desks in hotels, the hotel attendants, people you meet in a business way, people you meet socially—their eyes are not smiling eyes. They are eyes that give a level, calculating look, weighing your worth, wondering about your sincerity, withholding judgement, appraising you. The look of the Irish has none of the openness and immediate frankness of the American.

The American takes it for granted that he, personally, is the simplest and most honest of men, with nothing to hide and no reason to hide it. He is astonished when he finds out that many foreigners do not understand Americans. "What is there to understand?" he demands wildly. "What do you want to know?" If you give him half a chance, he'll go ahead to tell you all about his family life, his personal affairs, what he thinks of the government (never good) and anything else that comes into his head.

An Irishman seems to regard all foreigners as 1) potential interlopers, and 2) if not actually potential enemies, then at least potential scoffers. He is sure you came not to enjoy yourself in his country but for the express purpose of jeering at most of its institutions. He is outraged and insulted if a visitor says that he understands the Irish. He will give a short, bitter laugh if an out-

sider makes any claim of comprehending Irish psychology. He says in his heart, for he is too polite to say it to your face, "What a fool! Thinking to understand Ireland!"

One illustration shows vividly how puzzling the Irish can be. Surely, the Irish are famous for being gregarious and for being good mixers. No party or meeting or gathering ever died on its feet because somebody Irish was present. No Irishman ever choked to death trying to find a word suitable to the occasion. Who, unless it be our own Southerners, can rival the Irish for flowery, profuse speech and for the gift of bringing animation and vitality to any group they are a part of? Nobody thinks of the typical Irishman as a shy, tongue-tied person who would rather be alone.

Yet Mrs. G. B. Shaw, herself an Irishwoman and therefore presumably knowing all about her countrymen, left a fund in her will for the following purpose (according to the *New York Times* of February 17, 1944): "Two-thirds of her fortune, estimated at $400,000, to the National City Bank of Dublin as a special fund. The income must be used to finance organizations interested in bringing the masterpieces of fine art within the reach of the people of Ireland and *to establish and endow any educational institution or chair to teach the Irish self-control, deportment, elocution and the art of personal behavior and social intercourse.*" (The italics are mine.)

Now it becomes abundantly clear that either the rest of the world is all wrong about the Irish or the Irish don't even understand one another.

Often during my travels in Ireland I thought that perhaps I would title this book, "Past My Left Ear." Because, whenever I asked an Irishman to explain some quirk of Irish psychology, he would smile rather vacantly and stare past my left ear and make either no answer or an evasive one. I got so I understood what the Irish thought of such questions. They were thinking: "What's the use? What's the use of trying to explain to this foreign woman anything at all about our ancient culture or secret glory, or the

way we look at life?" They felt about me the way I might feel if some pleasant and amiable small child should buttonhole me and say, "Tell me about God."

I know what I think about God, what He means to me, how I approach Him, how my mind takes hold on God. But I could not tell the child what I know. I would have to stare past the left ear of the child and say, "Well, now . . ." Even if I made it as plain and as simple as I could, I would despair of touching the heart of the matter or reaching the heart of the child.

So it comes down to this: An American is indignant and bewildered if you say you cannot understand Americans.

An Irishman is furious and contemptuous if you presume to say you understand the Irish.

Ireland is a sea-borne island and all Irishmen live within the scent of the sea. They are nourished on fish and food grown with seaweed for fertilizer. Can it be that they are people of the sea, mermen and mermaids, only a couple of eons out upon dry land? Perhaps they are, more than any other people, oceanic, and their ways are the ways of the sea.

And if the sea is always with them, so is the memory of the past always with them, realer to most of them than the Ireland they live in today. It is more than love of the past; it is a state of existence in the past from which they never pull away. The Ireland of history, with all its proud and gallant people, its bards, its warrior heroes, its valiant citizens who swore the oath to free Ireland or die, these are realer in Ireland than the world of now.

The Irish of today are making desperate efforts to grow up, investigating modern methods of industry and of agriculture, of housing and of labor conditions. The government is determined to help the citizens to a good, substantial, decent, modern standard of life. Thoughtful men and women all over the country are making gallant strides toward these goals. Yet scratch the

most modern Irish businessman and you will find a lover of the old days; a worshiper of ancient heroes, a dweller in the past.

An American reveres the past—when he thinks about it. But who can deny that it is always the future to which Americans turn their eyes and their interests?

An Irishman will tell you how poor Ireland is with the same detached air of pride that a Texan will tell you how rich Texas is.

No, I will never understand Ireland or the Irish, but sometimes I came near it. Anyhow, I made a sporting try and I'm very glad I did.

The telephone rang one morning in my room at the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin and my husband's voice came to me from London.

"Remember me?" he asked.

"Only vaguely," I admitted.

"When are you coming out of there?" he asked.

"Oh, not for a long time," I said in alarm. "I haven't seen half—"

"I'm coming over to get you," my husband said. "This has been going on long enough." Suddenly I felt as tired as an old chiffon dress. I agreed with my husband. It had been going on long enough.

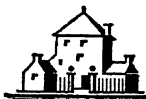
After he had hung up, I ran across the hall to tell Miss Witlov. She was standing in front of an open casement window looking out over the tulip beds in St. Stephen's Green. When she heard my news, her face rather lit up.

"Do you know," she said earnestly, "I have rather been *thinking* about London. But I wouldn't fly, you know. I couldn't, really. We'll have to persuade your husband to go back to London by boat."

In a couple of days, true to his word, my husband appeared, and I knew the Irish adventure was over. On an enchanting, mild and sunny May morning, he and I flew back to London.

And Miss Witlov flew with us.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

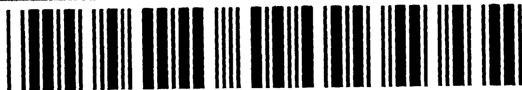


ORIANA ATKINSON is a native New Yorker who has traveled widely—Russia, England, France, Ireland, all over the United States, and around the world on a freighter. She lived for a year in Moscow and her experiences there produced a best-seller, *Over at Uncle Joe's: Moscow and Me.*

Mrs. Atkinson is also the author of three novels about the Catskills: *Big Eyes*, *Twin Cousins* and *The Golden Season.* Her most recent book was *Manhattan and Me*, a New Yorker's book about her home town.

She has written short stories and articles for magazines and newspapers. Her husband, Brooks Atkinson, is drama critic of *The New York Times.*

Mrs. Atkinson says of herself: "My hobbies are really not pursued; they more or less stand still and wait for me. I like trying to learn the Russian language, raising roses, reading all kinds of strange things, and going to the theatre."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